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WHY BELIEVE IT?

Practical Studies in Christian
Beliefs as Based on The Bible
and Corroborated by Science,
Philosophy and Experience

By

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The Life of Arthur T. Pierson

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Contents

	PAGE
Introduction	5
I. Foundations for Faith	7
II. Tests for Truth	14
III. The Riddle of the Universe	21
IV. Can We Know God?	28
V. The Credentials of Christ	36
VI. The Reality of the Spirit	48
VII. Concerning the Trinity	55
VIII. What Is the Bible?	60
IX. Sin—Fact or Fiction?	70
X. How Men Are Saved	78
XI. The Christian Life	87
XII. Why Work?	94
XIII. The Value of Money	103
XIV. Shall We Play?	110
XV. Marriage and Divorce	118
XVI. Effective Prayer	125
XVII. Death and Its Sequel	137
XVIII. Life and Its Meaning	146
XIX. The Return of Christ	155
XX. Creeds and Their Consequences	165

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Appreciation

The author and publishers express their gratitude and appreciation to The National Bible Institute for coöperation in bringing these chapters together in book form.

Introduction

BY DON O. SHELTON, LL.D.

President of the National Bible Institute, New York City

AT A TIME when many confusing voices are heard—in the pulpit and in current literature—it is of great advantage to have this clear, concise and comprehensive book on the central Christian teachings. It throws the bright light of Bible truth on life's most essential problems and most rewarding possibilities.

Mr. Pierson has brought to the writing of this book a highly trained and well-informed mind, a scholarly acquaintance with the Bible, a clear insight into the intricacies and necessities of the human heart, and a Christian character mature, rounded, well-poised, keenly intelligent.

A writer who, like Mr. Pierson, holds and teaches Christian truth in love, and whose constant desire is to help all classes of readers, is a real benefactor to the Christian Church at a time when much teaching in the name of the Church is shot through with a critical and censorious spirit.

Through all of these pages will be found respect for honest doubt and questioning. "We need never fear to face facts." This sentence reveals the satisfactoriness and helpfulness of the author's point of view in every one of his suggestive and illuminating chapters. Succinctly written, they are focused only on that which is vital. No one can read them without knowing what Christianity is and what Christian character should be, in the light of the plain teaching of the Bible.

The book is an attractive theological primer, having the unusual merit of being interestingly written. Into it is crowded a vast amount of instruction on things that matter most. To possess, within the compass of one volume, a clear and comprehensive portrayal of what essential Christianity is, is a priceless enrichment.

Any one who reads these chapters attentively will know what the Christian faith is and what the Christian life, based on New Testament teaching, should be. Such knowledge, assimilated and appropriated, is a guarantee of a life filled with the joy of the Lord and victorious through His indwelling and empowerment. There is sure guidance here into that masterful experience to which Paul testified: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The reading and re-reading of this book is a mental and spiritual tonic. It is so informative and so consecutive in its teaching, as to brace the reader's mind. It is provocative of thought and study. It reveals a reasoned confidence in the authoritativeness and essentialness of the Christian message. And it can be read thoughtfully in three hours! We cannot imagine any other three hours' reading that would yield a richer reward in suggestion, in knowledge, and in the strengthening and ennoblement of character.

As Mr. Pierson has freed his pages from prosiness and dullness, and has filled them with the teachings of Him in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored, parents will act wisely if they give this book to their sons and daughters as a birthday or a holiday gift.

Bible teachers and Gospel ministers, however advanced in knowledge, will find the atmosphere of these pages bracing and sustaining to an intelligent and triumphant Christian faith.

It is always good to know that a teacher and his teachings are in accord. A long personal acquaintance with Mr. Pierson and association with him in Christian service lead the writer of this introduction to say this sterling book and its author are one. In his own life the teachings here declared have been authoritative and generously fruitful, both in character and in achievement.

I

FOUNDATIONS FOR FAITH

THE world has few pioneers. For every one who has the ability to blaze new trails in exploration, in statescraft, in science or religion, millions must be ready to follow the trails already made. For one Columbus, there are thousands of pilgrims who enter newly discovered worlds; for one mining prospector, thousands of gold diggers follow the crowd and seek wealth; for one Edison, there are millions of electricians who utilize his discoveries and inventions; for one Paul, there are millions of disciples who rejoice in finding and following the Christ Paul preached. Some people take their faith, as babes take their mother's milk, without question because it is offered them and they are hungry. They do not question or analyze, they do not go exploring for new pastures nor desert established customs. Others reject anything that they have not proved. They insist that only their own analysis is reliable and satisfactory.

Unintelligent followers of tradition accept much that is false with that which is true and has stood the test of time. But unintelligent followers of science and of human philosophy reject much that is true because it is beyond their personal knowledge and experience. Those who would find the road to knowledge should not desert the old and tried paths merely to enjoy the experience of blazing a new trail. They should

not insist on being pioneers and experts in every field, but be ready to follow where others have led the way. They go forward, not blindly but intelligently and hopefully, gaining experience on the way and changing their course only when a better one is found. A traditional faith or custom is not necessarily irrational or unsatisfying, but beliefs and customs should be such as stand the test of reason and of experience. The old need not be rejected merely because it is time-worn and old-fashioned nor should the new be adopted merely because it offers the thrill of novelty. In the field of economics, in medicine, and in religion there are practical ways of testing the truth of theories—methods that lead on to the attainment of the highest goal.

When Jesus marvelled

Twice in the Gospels we are told that our Lord "marvelled." He in whom was all the wisdom of the Godhead was filled with wonder! Once He marvelled at the faith of a man in whom little faith might have been expected. "When Jesus heard (what the Centurian said) he marvelled and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matthew 8:10). At another time He marvelled at the lack of faith in those from whom much faith might have been expected. "And he (Jesus) marvelled because of their unbelief" (in His own country) (Mark 6:6). Does He not have cause to marvel for similar reasons today?

Is it true, as some would have us believe, that "creeds" are not important, that what a man is does

not depend on what he thinks, that actions are not greatly influenced by beliefs?

What is a "*creed*"? It is a statement of belief—usually a statement on which a large number of thinking, earnest students agree. What is "*theology*"? It is a systematic statement of belief about God and His laws that govern the universe. Men may differ in their conceptions, interpretations and statements, but it is important whether we believe God to be a loving and omnipotent Heavenly Father or conceive Him to be a selfish despot. It is also important that we know on what our belief is based—whether on superstition, tradition, philosophical reasoning, scientific investigations, personal experience, divine revelation or on several of these combined.

All thinking men are skeptics—at least in regard to some things and at some time. What is a "*skeptic*"? He is one who is "*looking around*" for truth and for a basis for belief. A confirmed and chronic skeptic is so in the habit of questioning and doubting that he usually loses hope of finding truth and drifts without anchor, compass or pilot.

A strong, intelligent man of faith is one who knows what he believes and why he believes it. He not only has confidence in his foundations, but his confidence is based on knowledge and experience. He can, with assurance, build on those foundations a life and works that are worth while. He can use his strength to help others who are in the slough of despond, or in the quicksands of doubt, so that they, too, may find the Rock where they can rest and build, undisturbed

by the varying and uncertain winds of human guess-work and by the attacks of infidelity and agnosticism.

In the following suggestive studies, we will deal, in a simple, non-technical way, with some of the most important and essential beliefs concerning God, man, history and conduct. The studies are not intended to be exhaustive but suggestive—the basis for further study—for personal profit or for public discourses and Bible class discussions.

The Paths to Knowledge

There are five generally accepted paths to knowledge. By following one or more of these ways, men usually reach established convictions as to truth:

1. *Witness of other men.* This may be through tradition, history, scholastic education, home-training or personal testimony. Its value depends on the reliability of the witness—for example, in the historian. We form our convictions as to Cæsar and the Roman Empire from the writings of those whom we believe to be most reliable as to facts and their interpretation.

2. *Scientific investigations.* This is a study of certain established facts in nature and the formulation of conclusions and laws based on this study. Its value depends on the intelligence of the investigator and on his access to all the important facts bearing on the subject: for example, as in astronomy. Most of us do not personally investigate the basis for our beliefs in regard to the sun and stars, but we accept the teachings of reputable astronomers.

3. *Personal experience.* This is a testing of theory

by the individual. Its value depends on sanity, freedom from unreasonable prejudice and the breadth, the length and depth of the experience: for example, in statesmanship and business.

4. *Philosophy*. This is a logical reasoning from certain fundamental generally-accepted facts to conclusions. The value of this method depends upon the mental training and ability of the philosopher to think clearly, honestly and to definite conclusions: for example, as in ethics and morals.

5. *Revelation*. This is the direct and authoritative superhuman testimony to truth. Its value depends on its clearness, certainty, the reliability of those who pass it on. Men usually accept or reject it in proportion as they think that it stands the test of experience: for example, as in prophecy.

Some Definitions

Superstition. A belief not based on facts or reason but on unreasoning credulity and fear.

Credulity. A readiness to believe without adequate reason as to facts or reliable testimony.

Skepticism. Looking around for facts and a basis for faith—usually without finding.

Atheism. A lack of belief in any god as accepted by others.

Agnosticism. A lack of knowledge, especially a claim that God and the spiritual things beyond human experience cannot be definitely and positively known by man.

Infidelity. Unbelief or disbelief in superhuman religion as accepted by other men.

Faith. "The title-deed to promises" (Hebrews 11: 1). The acceptance of certain promises, statements or premises as reliable truth, even though these may be beyond a man's present experience, or complete comprehension. Faith is based on confidence in the trustworthiness of the source of information rather than on personal experience or knowledge.

The Necessity for Faith. Not only is some creed, a clear and positive faith, a source of strength to men, but faith is absolutely necessary for stability and for progress in science, in business, in government and in society. Without well-founded confidence and definite beliefs, employers and employees, bankers, engineers, doctors, army officers, statesmen, parents, wives and husbands and children would flounder around, unable to make any progress.

Any satisfying faith must be based on knowledge and experience. God places no premium on ignorance or on careless acceptance of the statements of others. But the strongest, wisest, most progressive men are men of faith. These are the men and women who have discovered new worlds and have achieved great things in science, industry and in service to mankind.

Faith directly influences actions. Faith in an alarm of fire brings the engine; faith in a doctor leads a patient to take his medicine and advice. Faith in a bank leads a depositor to trust money to its care. Faith in a ship and its captain leads the traveler to commit himself to their keeping.

It is of immense importance that we have a strong, vital, well-grounded faith and that such faith be strengthened and able to stand the test of time. We acquire faith in a watch, in a mother or a friend by knowledge and experience. God asks us to put Him to the test. If we obey His laws and rely on His promises, we will be convinced of their reliability. Denials by unbelievers need not disturb us. Faith in aviation of one Colonel Lindbergh, who has repeatedly tested his aeroplane, is worth a thousand times more than the doubts of multitudes who have never given it a trial. Many fall into the snare of incredulity through the fear of being thought credulous. When science, history, personal testimony, personal experience and God's revelation all attest the truth of a proposition, then its truth may be considered so well established that one is justified in staking his life upon it. On such firm foundation are based the great outstanding beliefs of the Christian religion. But faith in a divine Person, faith in Jesus Christ, is of far greater value than faith in a multitude of statements of fact.

In the coming chapters, we plan to take up some of the well-established Christian beliefs and to study the reasons for holding the faith and some of the results that should follow.

II

TESTS FOR TRUTH

MEN and women have been divided into four types, according to their powers of discernment: First, the hour-glass type, through whom pass all things, good and bad, leaving nothing behind; second, sponges that absorb both good and bad in reading and environment; third, strainers that keep the worthless and allow the good to escape; and, fourth, sieves that retain the good and discard the useless.

The human mind is capable of far higher training and better discrimination. We may learn how intelligently to select the good, the pure, the useful, while we discard the worthless and false; we may even learn how to transform the evil into the good. This ability to choose wisely comprises the most valuable training that can be given to youth. It may be applied to the choice of work, of amusements, of investments, of friends, of ideals and of religion.

Men are not intended to be mere human copyists or blind followers. We are given discernment and judgment for a purpose. The "Collier's Faith" is too prevalent and it is inadequate. When a religious-minded collier was asked, "What do you believe?" he replied:

"What my church believes."

"But what does the church believe?"

"What I believe."

"Well, what do you both believe?"

"The same thing!"

We need not only a positive faith, but an intelligent faith, worth living for and worth dying for, if necessary.

Why We Believe

Most of us believe certain things about an automobile, aeroplanes, electricity, the earth and sun, ourselves, our parents, our friends, mankind, our country, our God. *Why* do we believe? How can we be confident that our faith is founded on facts?

In response to this question, members of a class of intelligent young men replied variously that their faith was based (1) on tradition, (2) on theoretical study, (3) on personal investigation and experience or (4) on the word of someone whose authority they were willing to accept.

Faith does not depend on sight and experience or even on our ability fully to understand. Faith is not wholly dependent on reason, but faith is not unreasonable or contrary to reason. We may have faith in the League of Nations, founded on certain facts, on our philosophy or on those in control, and yet this faith may not be based on personal experience. We may have faith in an astronomer's statement as to the composition of the sun or the distance of a star, and yet that faith may not rest even on personal understanding of how the facts are ascertained.

It is important to remember also that *the denial of the truth of a statement does not disprove the state-*

ment. Refusal to believe in the efficacy of prayer does not disprove the value of prayer, though it may hinder the unbeliever from experiencing the benefits derived from prayer, granted that they exist.

As Leonard Bacon said, when the truth of certain statements had been denied by an uninformed opponent: "My knowledge, however limited, is not to be discredited by my opponent's ignorance, however extensive."

Some Causes of Unbelief

Even where a fact may be well established, some will refuse to believe. Someone will be found ready to deny any truth, however well authenticated. The causes of unbelief may be:

1. *Ignorance.* For example, uninformed Chinese believe the eclipse of the sun to be due to the dragon in the heavens.

2. *Prejudice.* Wrong training, underlying misjudgments and misinterpretations may result in an unwillingness to believe. For example, mistrust of individuals, of races or nations. Jewish unbelief in Jesus is due, as a rule, to such prejudice (see Luke 16:31).

3. *Indifference.* Other interests may be so absorbing as to prevent one from forming any clear judgment: for example, many take no interest in the scientific theory of relativity or in the Bible teachings as to the Second Coming of Christ (John 8:43).

4. *Selfishness.* Appetites, ambition and personal plans may blind one to truth—for example, in regard to lying and deceit, indulgence in intoxicating drink

or some pet form of sin. Eyes that are shut produce the same effect as temporary blindness (John 3:20).

5. *Waiting for Special Signs.* Some refuse to believe because certain specified evidence is lacking. The demand for miraculous signs as credentials hinders faith (John 6:30).

6. *Inability.* Lack of mentality, lack of power to see clearly or to understand the language used may hide the truth. For example, an African may not understand a message delivered in a foreign tongue. A tree, having only vegetable life, cannot understand social science, and a cow, without an immortal soul, cannot comprehend things of God and eternity. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 53:1).

Realities are not dependent for their existence on our belief in them, but belief may be vital to welfare. Truth, facts, realities have their basis in God — the Creator of the universe.

Results of Disbelief in Truth

1. *Stagnation.* Loss of the opportunity to learn; lack of progress; for example, unbelief in the truths of the science of hygiene causes men to disregard the laws of health.

2. *Isolation.* Separation from those who believe; for example, in national and Christian life (see Matthew 13:58; Romans 11:20).

3. *Further Errors.* One error leads to another through lack of harmony with natural or civic laws; for example, in government, national and divine.

4. *Instability.* Weakness follows a non-recognition of truth (James 1:6).

5. *Failure.* Disregard of God's truth and God's laws leads to disappointment, possible ruin and death; for example, in handling electricity or in marriage, or as to the Way of Life (see Isaiah 7:9; John 5:39, 40).

How to Attain Clear and Strong Faith

1. Face doubts and face evidence.
2. Have the will to receive the truth, whatever it may cost (John 7:17).
3. Search for evidence and study it earnestly in order to know the truth: for example, as to laws of health, physical, mental and spiritual.
4. Accept reasonable testimony from the most reliable witnesses.
5. Act on the truth already known. One who knows and obeys the laws of nature becomes master of the forces of nature; so one who knows and obeys the laws of God has access to God's power.
6. Witness to others concerning the truth discovered.

How Distinguish Truth from Error?

No man or woman can expect to know everything but those who have ordinary intelligence and earnestness need not be ignoramuses or agnostics. Though we know only in part, *we can know* some things and we can be sufficiently confident in our knowledge to stake our lives on certain truths. We may not know all about the radio but we can have faith in its prac-

ticability and can know enough to make use of it. We can test our faith and increase our knowledge. We can learn to accept truth and discard error in history, in philosophy, in science, in religion:

1. By going to the most reliable sources of information, not trusting to mountebanks, or shallow, conceited, glib-tongued debaters.

2. By personal study and diligent investigation.

3. By practical experiment, putting to test theories and building upon truth ascertained. We need never fear to face facts. "Truth is mighty and will prevail." When the best authorities, personal study of evidence and experience all agree in confirming a belief, we are safe in building upon it.

Results of Faith (Hebrews 11)

A well-established and intelligent faith increases power. It also produces certain other definite and beneficial results.

1. *Action.* Faith in an alarm of fire incites to action to prevent damage. (Compare the result of faith in God's warnings found in the Bible.)

2. *Harmony.* Faith in a friend results in closer fellowship and better understanding. (Note the effect of faith in God's love.)

3. *Growth.* Faith in a course of healthful diet or medical treatment brings benefit. (Compare the benefits derived from faith in God's laws.)

4. *Power.* Faith in a strong leader or a mighty machine links one to power. (Similar results come from faith in the Holy Spirit.)

5. *Success.* Faith in a great army or a great cause is one of the essential elements of victory. (Compare the effect of faith in God's program.) (2 Chronicles 20:26, 27.)

6. *Satisfaction.* Faith in the love, the wisdom and power of God brings joy and peace under all sorts of circumstances (Hebrews 10:38 and 11:1).

7. *God's Blessing.* One who has faith in God may claim the blessings that God has promised. For example, Abraham, Joseph, David, Paul. (See John 3:21; John 20:29; Hebrews 11:20.)

III

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

MANY of us "take too many things for granted." We are too much like animals that eat and sleep, live and die without asking seriously whence we came, why we are here or whither we are going.

Can we answer these three questions: Whence came the universe? What is our relation to it? Has man a destiny beyond a few years of earthly existence?

If we can answer these questions satisfactorily, we may learn whether there is a Power beyond our sight, with which we may be in communication, and we may know what should be our relation to that Power. Here is the riddle of human existence and of the universe.

What do you consider a great distance,—a million miles? The sun is ninety-three million miles from the earth. That distance is almost beyond our comprehension and yet that is only one-fifth of the distance to Jupiter and one-thirtieth to Neptune. We can perhaps gain some faint idea of the size of the universe if we try to realize that the distance from the earth to the sun, compared with the distance to the nearest fixed star, is only as the diameter of a pinhead to a line four miles in length. Or try to realize what immensity is involved in the fact that the earth and the moon's orbit could be contained in the sun. Orion's nebula seems a speck in the midnight sky and yet it is

a million times as large as the earth's orbit around the sun.

Or try to comprehend the size of the universe in terms of the time required for light to travel to the earth from a distant star. Light travels one million times faster than an aeroplane and yet one of the stars, Canopus, is so far away that it took one hundred and eight years for its light to reach the earth.

Think, too, what it means that there is not only one solar system in the universe, but many. From one position on the earth, about five thousand stars can be counted by the naked eye. About three billion stars may be seen through the largest telescope. Each of these stars is a sun, many of them the centers of systems far greater than our solar system.*

Can we wonder that the Psalmist, who did not know the wonderful modern discoveries of astronomy, nevertheless exclaimed, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy hands . . . what is man that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8). How insignificant in size is man in comparison with the universe! He is as the smallest atom compared with the earth on which we live.

But not only is the universe beyond comprehension in its immensity. The microscope reveals infinitesimal marvels of beauty and design, such as those seen in the snowflake or in the scales on a butterfly's wing. Men even declare that they have discovered that the intricate structure of the atom, with its electrode and elec-

* See Thompson's "Outline of Science."

trons, is similar to the structure of the solar system, with its sun and planets.

Can any one believe that this universe, with all its beauty and wonders, *just happened*? Must not some Master Mind, with infinite power, have planned and called it into existence? The little brain of man cannot even conceive of space without limits, nor can we conceive of space beyond which there is no space. We cannot conceive of time without end nor of time before which and beyond which time ceases to be. We cannot comprehend infinite time or space! How then could we expect to comprehend the infinite God who could design and create a universe? *And yet* the human mind can understand events of time. We can understand and make use of many of the marvels of the universe in which we live. Why, then, should we not be able to grasp great truths about the infinite Creator of the world in which we live?

Whence Came the Universe?

Scientists (those who study created things and seek to discover and classify the laws that govern them) tell us that creation indicates a Master Mind, that it shows progressive development from simple to complex, that there are clear evidences of a benevolent purpose, that man is the highest and latest product of creation and is of a different order from other animate and inanimate creatures.

Does the Bible, which claims to teach the essential truths about God and man and their relation to each

other, harmonize with these conclusions drawn from the study of nature?

In the first chapter of Genesis we are told:

1. That God, an intelligent Being, is the creator of the universe; that it did not come into existence by chance or by "a fortuitous concourse of atoms."

2. That the universe was created, not in a moment and fully developed, but by progressive stages, in successive periods called "days" (the same word "day" is used for the whole period of creation in Genesis 2:4 as is used for each successive shorter period in Genesis 1:5, etc.).

3. That in process of creation the different stages succeeded one another—first cosmic light and atmosphere; then the earth emerged from the waters and the heavenly bodies of the solar system appeared; then vegetation sprouted, followed by sentient life in the following order: fish, birds and mammals. Finally came man, the highest order of earthly beings and endowed with special power to control lower forms of creation.

4. That man is *essentially different* from other creatures and that this difference is not due to higher progressive development, or to better education, but is due to his kinship to the Creator. Man has a spiritual life and power that other animals do not possess. In other words, man is not only a body, temporarily endowed with life and intelligence, but is essentially a spirit. He is akin to God—who is Spirit. But man is also akin to other sentient creatures for he is temporarily possessed with a body which is from the earth,

Thus the discoveries of science and the statements of the Bible harmonize in the essential truths concerning creation.

Why Are We Here? What is man's relation to the earth and the universe? This question science does not answer clearly; it only shows that the earth, with its fruits, creatures, water and atmosphere, is adapted to be the home of man. The Bible teaches that the earth is a kingdom which man is able to subdue and rule; a storehouse to supply his needs; a school for his education; a place of service and of fellowship with his fellow-humans and a sphere in which he may learn to come into right relations with God. The Bible also declares that man was created, not as a machine, but as a free agent; able to discern between good and evil, and with power of choice. He is able to use all created things for good purposes or is free to abuse them if he chooses (1 John 2:15-17; 1 Cor. 7:31).

What is the destiny of man? Is earth his only sphere? Science utterly fails to provide any clear answer. From the Word of God, however, we learn that man is more than an animal. He is an immortal spirit (Genesis 2:7). He was so created that he might—

1. Become godlike—spiritual, holy, wise, powerful, having dominion, loving, serving others (Mat. 5:48; Romans 8:29; Col. 3:2; 1 John 3:2).

2. Be in friendly and intelligent fellowship with God (1 Cor. 2:14, 15).

3. Develop and cultivate the earth (Gen. 1:28), discovering the secrets of the universe (Rev. 3:21),

and also look forward to a deathless life. Man and the universe are so adapted to each other that he may enjoy life and all created things, but he is not to be satisfied with material and temporal things (1 Thes. 5:23). The earth is not intended to be man's home forever. The scientists also declare that the earth is changing and may, in time, become a dead planet, unfit for the home of man.

The character and works of the God, who created this universe and placed man in it, will be considered in the next chapter. Does it not seem reasonable to hold that man should seek to know the Creator of this Universe, to discover and obey His laws? Is it not reasonable to expect that more attention should be given to spiritual than to material things, and that we should use the temporal things chiefly in preparation for the enjoyment of eternal things?

The late Dr. Charles P. Steinmetz, the famous "wizard of science," for many years connected with the General Electric Company of Schenectady, New York, remarked that science cannot tell everything about the realities of the universe. He was one of the greatest scientists of the times, but with him science did not stand in place of religion. He said:

"If the conceptions of physical science are incompatible with the metaphysical conceptions of God, immortality, infinity and spiritual life, are these conceptions of science really final and all-embracing? Or are they limited, applying only within a certain range and not going beyond this? Science derives its conclusions by the laws of logic from our sense percep-

tions. It deals only with the world as it appears to our senses. The non-existence in science of the conceptions of God and immortality therefore really means nothing except that we cannot by reasoning reach conclusions not based on the premises on which we started our reasoning. Faith must always remain the foundation of religion."

IV

CAN WE KNOW GOD?

THERE are many varied ideas of the nature of God. How can we discover which are true?

Have you ever put down on paper exactly what *your* idea of God is? In that way your conception of Him will be clarified or you may discover how indistinct and imperfect is your thought of Him. The conception we have of God shapes our religion and, if we are consistent, should shape our conception of the world and our whole life. But is God what we think Him to be? Our belief as to God does not determine the facts as to His nature and activity, but the facts, if discoverable, should determine our conception of Him.

How do you know that your idea of God is more true to fact than is the idea of your neighbor—the Christian Scientist, the Unitarian, the Mormon, the Moslem, the Hindu or the Buddhist? Where did you get your conception of God—from your parents, your teachers, your comrades, your reading? Does your conception harmonize with the Bible teaching? If you had no Bible, where would you look for a satisfying and reliable knowledge of God?

Various Conceptions of God

Men's varied conceptions of God are attempts to discover Him, to find out the truth about Him. These conceptions have been classified as follows:

Animism. Belief in spirits or disembodied personalities, good and evil; to be feared and placated. Some animists believe in a great, dominating Spirit. (Such are the African beliefs.)

Polytheism. Belief in many gods; often in conflict; representing different forces or spheres in life. (Such is Hinduism.)

Pantheism. Belief that God is an all-pervading spirit, present in all forms of creation, especially of life. (Such is Buddhism.)

Materialism. No personal god and no spirit apart from matter and energy; all things governed by law. (Such is the belief of some scientists.)

Deism. Belief in an impersonal Power, a First Cause that created and controls the universe. (Such is the belief of some philosophers.)

Theism. Belief in a personal and intelligent Power ruling the universe. (This includes the higher forms of religion.)

Monotheism. Belief in only one supreme Personality possessing the power, wisdom and will to control the whole universe. (This includes the belief of Mohammedans, Jews and Christians.)

The Christian conception of God includes the best and most essential of all these conceptions and more—it includes belief in the existence of spirit apart from body; one supreme, all-wise, all-powerful and benevolent Spirit; that Spirit having personality; that personality having many sides and being manifest in the varied forms of creation; the Creator and Ruler of the universe, who is interested in human life.

In addition to these views, Christianity contributes the belief that this God is clearly and most completely revealed in Jesus Christ, who came to earth as an Eternal Spirit, one with God in nature but appearing in the form and nature of a man in order to draw men to God, to give them victory over evil and to make possible their eternal life with God.

The Definitions of God

Have Christians good reason to be satisfied that this conception of God is correct — even though incomplete? Definitions are important, since many debates and conflicts arise from the different use of terms. But definitions are limitations and are especially difficult when we try to define (to “limit”) God, the Unlimited, the Eternal, the Infinite. For practical purposes, the term God in general refers to a Superhuman Power that can influence the lives and destinies of men. In a Christian sense, the term GOD refers to the supreme and only Ruler of the Universe, the Creator of all things, the Eternal Father of mankind, a personal Spirit, perfect, all-wise and loving, with power to carry out His good purpose. By *personal* Spirit we mean a personality without a limited physical body, but intelligent and self-impelled, able to will, to love, to act, to reveal Himself.

If this conception of God is true to fact, then God is too great for our little minds and limited experience fully to comprehend Him. But such a God would be able to make Himself known to man sufficiently to carry out His good purposes.

May we be satisfied that this conception of God, though incomplete, is true to facts? Does this belief as to God harmonize not only with the Bible teachings but with the most assured discoveries of science in reference to the universe, the best accredited experience in human history, the most intelligent philosophy and the convictions of high-minded men and women? If these sources of information agree in upholding such a conception of God, surely we may be satisfied that the God, made known by Christ, is the true God and we may be ready to stake our lives on this truth.

The Basis for Belief in God

What, then, is the basis for our conviction as to the truth of the Christian conception of God? Consider the evidences from the following sources:

1. *The Study of Nature.* The evidences of intelligent design in the universe, the infinite expanse of the heavens, the minute wonders and beauty revealed by the microscope, the prevalence of law and order, the benevolent provision made for man and beast, and the marvelous adaptation of the human body to meet the needs of existence, are all in favor of the Christian conception of God. Take one example: An exception to a general law, or a supplementary law counterbalancing another law, is evidence that the Author of these natural laws is a wise and benevolent Creator rather than an impersonal controlling Force. There is a general law that heat expands and cold contracts. If this were universal, lakes and rivers, in cold climates, would freeze solid in winter because the ice would

form and sink to the bottom. This would destroy fish and would cut off the water supply. But the exception or counter-law that water expands and floats at freezing is an intelligent and benevolent provision. In the same way the law of capillary attraction acts to offset the general law of gravitation.

2. *The Study of Man.* Human intelligence, man's moral nature, power to love, to work, to improve, to distinguish between good and evil, to choose the good, to understand more than material things—all are evidences that the Creator of man must be possessed of these characteristics and that He endowed man with them for a purpose. Human philosophy, as expressed by the greatest minds, produces arguments in favor of such a God. Note Gladstone, Kepler, Lord Kelvin and others. Even the difficulties encountered by mental philosophies only show that God is greater than any human conception of Him.

3. *Experience.* The history of mankind, the rise and fall of nations, like Babylon, Rome and Russia, show that progress accompanies the use of God-given faculties and obedience to God's laws, and that national decline and decay follow disobedience. Thoughtful, experienced men are convinced that happiness and prosperity would follow the universal adoption and practice of Christ's teachings. The higher a people's conception of God and the more consistent their obedience to His laws, the greater their progress.

Individual experience points to the same conclusions. The testimony of thousands of men and women of all ages, races, nations and conditions argues in favor of

the acceptance of the Christian conception of God. Tested by its fruits, in spite of men's failure to live fully up to Christ's standards, Christian belief concerning God is accredited as true.

The Bible Presentation of God

4. *Revelation.* The Bible claims to be a revelation from God to man. Christ claimed to be a revealer of God, without human imperfections or guess-work (John 1:18). What are some things that the Bible and Christ teach about God? Are they consistent with the conclusions drawn from scientific study, reason and experience?

Here we must remember the limits of language and of human understanding. If God is infinite, as He is represented to be, then finite man, with all his intelligence, cannot expect fully to comprehend Him. Human language, with all its power to express thought, cannot be expected to convey all the truth of spiritual things any more than a philosopher or scientist could expect to convey the intricate truths and theories of higher mathematics or mental philosophy to an alien who did not fully understand the terms used and had not spent years in the study of the subject.

The Bible teaches (using only a few references) that God is:

Spirit—Exodus 34:6; John 4:24; Col. 1:15.

Light—1 John 1:5; John 1:9.

Love—1 John 4:8; John 3:16.

Giver of Life—Gen. 2:7; 1 Timothy 6:13.

A Person—Exodus 3:14; John 5:26.

Creator of the Universe—Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3; Acts 17:29.

Ruler of the Universe—1 Chron. 16:23-35; Psalm 97:1; Rev. 11:17.

Holy, Just, Good—Leviticus 19:2; Rev. 4:8; Isa. 6:3.

Infinite and Eternal—John 1:1; Ps. 90:2; Mat. 19:26; Ps. 147:5.

Father in Heaven—Mat. 6:9.

A Trinity—Three manifestations of one God—Mat. 28:19.

The Father, pervading all—Mat. 6:9.

The Son, coming as a man to reveal Himself—John 1:1, 14; John 14:10.

The Spirit—Living in God's children, unseen but active in the world—John 14:16, 17.

Some of these truths concerning God cannot be discovered through science or by unaided human experience. To be known, they must be revealed by a higher intelligence. They are part of the revelation by Jesus Christ in the Bible (Mat. 11:27). If these teachings are facts, some men may still not believe them (for the reasons given in a previous study), but that does not disprove them. The difficulties that confront those who do not believe in God are far greater than the difficulties of belief in God as presented by Christ in the New Testament. Is there any other view of God that can satisfactorily account for the universe, for man, for the Church, for Jesus Christ? Without such a God, all these are incomprehensible. We have not seen God, but we may experience Him. The invisible

forces in the universe are becoming more and more recognized as the most powerful. We do not see air or electricity, but we may see the effects and may experience them.

What is the natural result of belief in such a God?

1. It is of greatest importance that we should seek to know Him, His laws and His high purposes.

2. It is of prime importance that we seek His help to live in harmony with His laws and nature and to do the work for which He created us.

3. It is our duty and privilege to tell others what we have learned about Him and that we endeavor to convince them of the advantages of acknowledging Him and of living in harmony with His will.

Some books for study, in addition to the Bible and Concordance, are:
"A Christian View of God and the World," by James Orr; "The A Priori Argument for God," by W. H. Gillespie; "Christianity Attested by Its Historical Effects," by R. S. Storrs; "Thoughts on Religion," by George J. Romanes.

V

THE CREDENTIALS OF CHRIST

IF A MAN should appear today in your town or city, claiming to be the Son of God, or having such a claim made for him by his followers, what tests would you apply to decide whether or not these claims were true? If he were an impostor, we ought to reject and expose him; if he were genuine, we ought to follow him, at whatever cost.

There is very little dispute today as to the existence and character of God, but it is not so with regard to Christ. While historians acknowledge that such a character as Jesus lived and was put to death in Palestine about nineteen hundred years ago, there is great disagreement as to His character and the validity of His claims. Some say that He was only a good man, a Jewish prophet, a healer; others hate His very name and would like to blot out the remembrance of Him from the earth; many have never heard of Him or know only His name. On the other hand, multitudes look upon Him as more than man and would die rather than be disloyal to Him.

More people on earth today are called by the name of Christ than are counted as followers of any other religious leader. The Mohammedans number about 240,000,000; the Buddhists claim perhaps 200,000,000; Confucianism, though not a religion, is accepted by not more than 300,000,000, while Christians of

all nations number over 500,000,000—about one third of the world's population. While many of these are only nominal Christians, multitudes worship Jesus as eternal God Himself, manifest in human form.

What is *your* belief about Jesus? A simple, clear, comprehensive statement, with the reasons for your belief, will help you. Would your reasons convince any intelligent, open-minded and earnest seeker after truth? Christ's claim to supremacy does not rest on the ground of the number of His followers—Buddha has more in many lands; nor on the beauty of His character—multitudes hold the Bab in as high esteem; nor on the sublimity of His teachings—millions of Chinese believe that Confucius was superior; nor on the ground that many would die for Him—so would many Mohammedans die for their prophet. Heredity, early training, mob psychology all influence belief, but none of these offer sufficient ground for accepting Christ. If you had been brought up a Moslem or a Buddhist, what would convince you that you should renounce your hereditary faith and, in spite of opposition and even in the face of death, become a follower of One whom you had been taught to despise?

The question: "What think you of Christ?" is supremely important, first, because of the unique claims that Christ makes; second, because so many noble, intelligent men and women accept His claims and testify to the help they receive from Him; third, because Christianity is still spreading and most men must sooner or later decide as to their attitude toward Christ; fourth, because of the results of rejecting or

accepting Him. A man's attitude toward Christ affects all his ideals, his daily life and work and his view of death and the hereafter.

How are we to test such tremendous claims as those that are made for Jesus Christ as the Son of God? How can we test them, intelligently, fairly, open-mindedly, as we would test the claims of Mohammed; of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, or of the late Alexander Dowie, the Zionist?

1. We must examine what He claims for Himself.
2. We must examine His credentials. Are His character, conduct, message and work consistent with His claims?
3. What is the testimony of friends and enemies?
4. What results follow acceptance or rejection?
(Historic and personal test.)

I. Jesus' Claims for Himself

1. WHO HE WAS:

- (1) The Son of man—the representative of mankind (Mat. 11:19, etc.).
- (2) The Messiah—The Anointed of God, promised in Old Testament times (Mat. 16:16; Luke 24:26, etc.).
- (3) The Son of God (John 9:35-36; Luke 22:70, etc.).
- (4) One with God (John 10:30; 14:6, 9; 17:21, 22).

2. WHENCE HE CAME AND WHITHER HE WAS GOING:

- (1) From God and Heaven (John 3:13; 6:38; 8:23).
- (2) Before Abraham (John 8:58; 17:5).
- (3) Returning to Heaven (John 16:28; 20:17).
- (4) Continuing to live among His disciples (Mat. 28:20).

3. HIS POWERS AND PREROGATIVES:

- (1) King—not of this world (John 18:36, 37).
- (2) Saviour of the lost (John 12:47; Luke 19:10).
- (3) Power to give life (John 5:21; 6:40, 51; 10:28; 17:2).
- (4) Power to forgive sins (Mat. 9:6).
- (5) Power to reveal God (Mat. 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 14:7).
- (6) Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28).
- (7) Power to lay down and take up His own life (John 10:18).
- (8) Power over evil spirits (Mat. 12:28).
- (9) Superhuman knowledge (John 2:24; 3:11; 13:11).
- (10) All authority in Heaven and on earth (Mat. 28:18). He received the worship of men as His right (John 5:23; 9:38; 20:28).

4. OTHER NAMES AND TITLES:

Light of the World, Bread of Life, the Way, the Truth, the Life, Good Shepherd, Giver of Living Water, etc.

Note also what He said about the purpose of His coming (Luke 19:10; John 10:10; Mat. 9:13; 10:45; Luke 4:43; Mat. 11:28; John 14:6).

Note what He said as to the results of His work (John 16:33; 12:32; 17:4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 22, 26; Mat. 16:27).

Note His claims as to His special relation to God (Luke 10:22; John 5:20, 23; 8:42; 10:30; 12:45; 14:10; 16:15; 17:3, 11, 24).

These claims show clearly that Jesus and His disciples believed Him to be not only a good man and a wonderful teacher and healer, but more than man—One having the character and powers of Almighty God. How could He have been even a *good man*, and claim these powers and characteristics, if they are not true?

II. The Evidence of Jesus' Deity

1. *His character was Godlike.* No fault was found in Him by His judge, Pontius Pilate. He manifested the purity, the love, the mercy and the wisdom of God. If Jesus was the product of Judaism and of His time, why have not better men and more enlightened teachers been produced since? Think about that.

2. *His works were Godlike.* He healed the sick and maimed; he raised the dead, cast out evil spirits, fed the hungry and stilled the tempests. The record says

that He had powers such as we would expect God to have and He used them in a Godlike way—not to harm enemies or to awaken wonder, but to help mankind. They were “signs” that made men marvel and believe in Him (Mat. 15:31, etc.). He asked men to believe Him “for the very works sake” (John 14:11).

3. *His message was Godlike.* His words were consistent with truth, wisdom, holiness and love. Concerning God and the future He taught, with authority, truth that could surely be known from no other source (John 3:3-18). His conversations, sermons and answers to questions and His parables have been the marvel of all ages. Is not all that we know of Jesus consistent with His claim to be the Son of God?

4. *The events of His life* were such as might be expected of God, coming as a man, among sinful men—His birth, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, the events at His death, His resurrection and ascension. These are not used as proofs of His deity but they are harmonious with other evidence and claims.

III. The Testimony of Others

According to the historical record, direct testimony to the uniqueness of Jesus came from John the Baptist, from the Apostles, from spirits, from friends and enemies and from God the Father, Himself. The Old Testament prophets, the last of whom lived over four hundred years before Christ, foretold His birth, His ancestry, His birthplace, His time, His character, His ministry, His death and resurrection. Over three

thousand Old Testament predictions are said to find their fulfillment in Christ.

Since the first century, the stream of testimony, given by the most intelligent and honored of men and women, has been continuous and clear. This testimony comes from all ages, all races, all nations and all classes in astonishing accord.

All down through the ages men of many stations and nations have expressed their views as to the validity of the claims of Christ. Even some who have rejected His supreme claim have acknowledged His supremacy.

Early Disciples (26-30 A. D.): "The Messiah" (John 1:41); "the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42); "The Son of the living God (Mat. 16:16); "equal with God" (Phil. 2:6); "My Lord and my God"—Thomas (John 20:28).

Other Contemporaries (26-30 A. D.): "Never man so spake"—Jewish officers (John 7:46); "I find no fault in this man"—Pilate (Luke 23:4); "Truly this was the Son of God"—Roman soldiers (Mat. 27:54).

Polycarp (69-155 A. D.): "Eighty and six years have I served Him; my Lord and Saviour."

Ignatius (First century): "I would rather die for Christ than rule the world."

Julian, Emperor of Rome (331-363 A. D.): "Thou hast conquered, Galilean."

Mohammed (570-632 A. D.): "Christ Jesus . . . honorable in this world and in the world to come . . ."

Jan Hus (1369-1415): "The image of Christ shall never be effaced."

William Shakespeare (1564-1616): "Jesus Christ, my Saviour."

John Milton (1608-1674): "Begotten Son, Divine Similitude."

Spinoza (1632-1677): "He is the Temple of God."

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772): "The Lord Jesus Christ is Jehovah, the Lord, Creator from eternity, Saviour in time and Reformed to eternity."

J. J. Rousseau (1712-1778): "The life and death of Jesus are those of a god."

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804): "One of those before whom the heavens bow."

George Washington (1732-1799): "The divine Author of our blessed religion."

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826): "I am a disciple of the doctrine of Jesus."

Napoleon Bonaparte (1768-1821): "Jesus Christ was more than man."

Daniel Webster (1782-1852): "I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God."

Lord Byron (1788-1824): "If ever man was God, or God man, Jesus Christ was both."

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822): "Jesus Christ, the Being who has influenced in the most remarkable manner the opinions and fortunes of the human species."

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881): "Jesus of Nazareth . . . the greatest of all heroes."

Thomas B. Macauley (1800-1859): "Deity embodied in human form."

James Martineau (1805-1900): "Jesus Christ must be called the Regenerator of the human race."

William E. Gladstone (1809-1898): "All that I live for is based on the divinity of Jesus Christ."

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865): "I can say with sincerity that I hope I am a Christian."

✓ *Charles Dickens* (1812-1870): "I commit my soul to the mercy of God through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887): "If Christ be not divine, every impulse of the Christian world falls to a lower octave."

Count Leo Tolstoi (1828-1910): "I believed in the doctrines of Jesus and my whole life underwent a sudden transformation."

Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899): "For the man Christ . . . I have the highest admiration and respect. Had I lived in His day, I would have been His friend."

✓ *J. Pierpont Morgan* (1837-1913): "I commit my soul into the hands of my Saviour."

William McKinley (1843-1901): "My belief embraces the divinity of Christ."

Arthur James Balfour (1849): "Christ is a rare Jewel, but men know not His value . . . No mind can fully grasp His glory."

Charles W. Fairbanks (1852-1920): "We reverently acknowledge Jesus Christ as the supreme Author of all that is greatest and best in the world."

IV. The Evidence of History

But an argument for the truth of Jesus' claims—even more convincing than the record of His character and teachings when on earth—is His effect on nations and individuals since His death. *Something remarkable nineteen hundred years ago changed the whole course of history.* Cowards became courageous, Jews became Christians, opponents of Jesus became martyrs for love of Him. That some Thing or some Power has been working wonders ever since. With the acceptance of the claims of Christ, the Roman world was transformed; then the Teutons and Franks were transformed and the Britons, the Celts, the Picts and the Scots, the Scandinavians and the Slavs. Students report that the change for the better has been proportionate to the degree of intelligent acceptance of Jesus' teachings in regard to Himself and the Way of Life.

In modern times, similar miracles may be observed. By this faith and this Power, savages are still transformed into pure and friendly men of peace—in Africa, in Asia, in America, and in the South Sea Islands. Communities are purified and are made law-abiding and enlightened—as among the Metlakahtla Indians, the people of Livingstonia, the villages of the Telegus, the Koreans and the army of Marshal Feng in China. Wrecked human character has been salvaged and made over by this same Christ in the Water Street Mission of New York, in the Chinatown of San Francisco, in the McAll Missions of France and in White Chapel district of London. The hospitals,

schools and churches of all lands have been built in the name of Jesus Christ.

V. Personal Experience

But to most earnest seekers after the Truth, the unanswerable argument is that from personal experience. Men and women who feel the need of a divine Saviour and are ready to give Jesus Christ a fair chance to prove His power, have the answer in themselves. It is not by logical arguments from philosophy or past history that men are convinced that the claims and promises of Jesus are true; it is not even by the testimony of others, however positive; but it is by experiencing the power of Christ to heal, to enlighten, to strengthen and give the victory. That argument withstands all the assaults of unbelief. Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell, of Labrador, says: "If I find a remedy that works, I have a right to believe in it." Jesus Christ offers to cleanse, to illumine, to empower, to satisfy—and He does these things for those who accept His claims and entrust themselves to Him. This is the convincing test.

Our Faith and Its Basis

We believe, then, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Eternal God, the Revealer of God the Father; we believe that He lived and died and rose again to save those who trust and follow Him; that He is living today and is worthy to receive homage and full obedience. We believe that He will come again to reign in power, as He promised.

We believe this (1) because the Gospel record shows

Him to be truly Godlike in His character, His life, His teachings and His work; (2) because He fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. (3) We believe this because of His influence on the history of the world and because of the transformations that have been and are being wrought through Him. (4) We believe it because the greatest and best men and women of our acquaintance so believe in and follow Him. (5) Finally, we believe in Him because of the change He has wrought in our own heart and life. He has fulfilled His promises.

VI

THE REALITY OF THE SPIRIT

IN THESE days of discussions as to spiritism, mediums and similar phenomena, it is important that thinking shall be clarified as to what we believe and the basis for belief as to spirit manifestations, especially as to the nature, manifestations and work of the Holy Spirit. Think also of the many references to the Holy Spirit in Christian sermons, benedictions, prayer. What do these references mean to you as to the character and work of the Spirit?

Naturally the comprehension of spirit is most difficult for the ordinary man. You cannot see a spirit, feel a spirit, taste, hear or smell a spirit with physical senses. Consequently those who depend wholly on these senses for knowledge deny the very existence of spirit and of spiritual phenomena. On the other hand, belief in spirit and in immaterial spirits of some kind, is practically universal. Since very ancient days, spirits have been thought to reside in trees and other material things. Ghost stories arise from belief in disembodied human spirits and the most advanced and well-founded theology involves a belief in spirit outside of matter and working in material things.

Belief or disbelief in spirit is tremendously important. Granted a superhuman God, who is spirit and not matter, it is easy to acknowledge the possibility of a Holy Spirit and of other spirits. The New Testa-

ment has a hundred direct references to the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost and the Old Testament refers many times to the "Spirit of God." Man's difficulty in understanding spirit is due to limitations of knowledge and experience. As Christ said to Nicodemus: "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" It is as difficult to convey spiritual truth to ignorant human beings through the limited medium of materialistic language as it is to convey to an uneducated African the truths of advanced philosophy and science.

What Is Spirit?

This term is used to designate a living, disembodied personality, intangible and invisible.

The nearest material thing to spirit is breath or air. This is the term used in the Bible: "God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living spirit" (Genesis 2:7). "The wind blows where it wills," said Jesus to Nicodemus, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Other phenomena that help one to understand spirit are electricity, magnetism, light and life; and yet spirit is more ethereal and is not to be confused with air, breath, electricity, magnetism or any material force.

How, then, is it possible to recognize and understand spirit and spiritual phenomena? We say that a man's spirit looks through his eyes; a woman's spirit may be revealed in her letters; a child's spirit may be shown in his actions. National spirit is revealed in national laws, institutions and demonstrations. We may test

the reality, characteristics and workings of spirit—as we test magnetism, invisible violet rays or life—by the *results* that follow recognition of its reality and obedience to its laws.

And yet, though spirit exists, some may still deny its reality and may fail to discern spiritual things. A blind man cannot see light and a man without a spectroscope cannot discern the facts about heavenly bodies revealed by it. To understand spirit, we must have keen spiritual senses, must study sources of information and must obey the laws of the Spirit.

As in the case of other matters about which the masses of mankind are ignorant, our first clear information comes from higher sources. We take the word of some *Authority*, if there be such, and then test the truth and confirm it by personal experience.

The Holy Spirit

As to the reality, nature and functions of the Holy Spirit, we have the word of Jesus Christ, and of others in the Bible. (See Genesis 1:2; 6:3; Joel 2:28; Mat. 3:16; 4:1; John 16:8-14, etc.) We have the testimony of multitudes of intelligent men who speak from experimental knowledge and we have the opportunity of testing by personal experience.

Names of the Spirit. In the Bible the Spirit of God is called Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, my Spirit, the Comforter, Helper or Advocate, the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Jesus.

Characteristics of the Spirit of God. (The term Holy Spirit is used in preference to Holy Ghost be-

cause of the common use of the word "ghost" in superstitious stories of spooks.)

1. The Holy Spirit is a *person*. By this we mean a spirit that, while disembodied, has individuality and the power of self-expression. The Spirit is called *He* and can say of Himself "I"; can speak, will, and act. (See John 14:16, 17; 15:26; 16:7-17, etc.)

2. The Spirit is *Holy* and has the characteristics of God, the Father—infinite wisdom, love, power. He is so much to be revered that the one sin for which there is no repentance or forgiveness is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mat. 12:31). The sin of Ananias was lying to the Holy Spirit which was, in fact, lying to God (Acts 5:3).

In Old Testament times the Holy Spirit was called "The Spirit of God," "My spirit," or the "Spirit of the Lord" (Jehovah). He was in the world, but was manifested or recognized only on special occasions and to special individuals. (Numbers 24:2; 1 Samuel 10:10; Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 48:16; Joel 2:28; Zech. 4:6; 2 Peter 1:21, etc.)

After our Lord's ascension, His promise, and the promise of God through the Prophet Joel, were fulfilled. The Holy Spirit was given to all believers in Jesus Christ (Acts 2). (See also Luke 11:13; John 20:22, etc.)

The Work of the Spirit

He lives in believers and does the work of God in them and through them, giving them life and light, power and wisdom, courage and victory.

(1) He witnesses to the truth of Jesus and His claims (John 15:26; 16:14, 15; Acts 5:32; 1 John 5:8).

(2) He convicts the world of the sin of unbelief (John 16:8).

(3) He gives spiritual life to believers (John 3:6; 1 Peter 3:18).

(4) He guides believers into truth and reveals things to come (John 16:13; Acts 20:23; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11).

(5) He directs believers in life and service (Acts 16:6, 7; Galatians 5:18, etc.)

He gives courage (Acts 4:31) and comforts the afflicted (John 14:16).

He empowers for service (Acts 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:11) and helps in infirmities (Rom. 8:26).

He may be resisted by those who will not yield to His influence and witness in their hearts (Acts 7:51).

He is grieved by indifference to Him and by strife or disregard of His leadings (Ephesians 4:30).

He may be quenched (made inactive in the believer) by disloyalty and other sin (1 Thess. 5:19).

Requirements for Experiencing the Reality and Power of the Holy Spirit in Life and Work

(1) Belief on Jesus and baptism in His name (Mat. 28:19; John 7:38, 39).

(2) Recognition of the Holy Spirit and readiness to receive Him (Acts 19:2-6).

(3) The expectancy of believing prayer (Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1).

(4) Obedience to God (John 14:16; Acts 4:31).

(5) Study, meditation, prayer (Luke 11:13).

What then: If God has offered such life and power, such wisdom and guidance, such comfort and courage, such practical help as God alone can give, are we not worse than foolish to neglect any means to understand His offer and to benefit by this power? He has made it possible for men to have greater facilities than are described in the Arabian Nights to those to whom the genii were servants. We can know and do things that would otherwise be impossible to mortal man. By the Holy Spirit, we may be linked up to the life, the wisdom, the holiness, the power of God Himself.

We Believe in the Holy Spirit Because

1. We believe in God—Who is spirit.

2. We believe Jesus Christ—Who spoke definitely of Him.

3. We believe that the apostles (Peter, Paul, John) knew from experience His reality and power.

4. Multitudes of the noblest, most intelligent men and women who have lived during the past two thousand years, have testified to experiencing His guidance, comfort and power.

5. The saints and prophets of the Old Testament times (Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Daniel) claimed and showed evidences that they were taught and strengthened by the Spirit of God.

6. A belief in His existence and activity in the world gives the most satisfying explanation of the conversion of men to God, the awakenings in the Church

and the many evidences of the fulfillments of Christ's promises in regard to the Spirit.

7. His reality and work is the only satisfactory explanation of many personal experiences of men like Martin Luther, John Knox, John Wesley, D. L. Moody, Charles H. Spurgeon, John Henry Jowett, King Khama, Sheikh Metwry Dewari, Paul Kana-mori, Sadhu Sundar Singh and countless others.

Summary

The Holy Spirit is God.

The Holy Spirit is a Person.

The Holy Spirit gives life to believers in Christ.

The Holy Spirit dwells in believers.

The Holy Spirit gives courage, comfort, guidance, power to believers.

The Holy Spirit coöperates with those who obey Christ and who witness to Him.

True believers in Christ may be guided in their prayers and work, and may have fruitful, joyful lives of service if they will.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers and the measure of His control over men's lives makes all the difference between Christians and non-Christians; between ignorant, weak, unlovely Christians and wise, powerful and godly Christians. The power of omnipotence, the wisdom of omniscience and the love of perfect benevolence is offered to those who meet the conditions.

VII

CONCERNING THE TRINITY

THIS is one of the most difficult subjects for Christians to understand. It is the greatest stumbling-block to Mohammedans who accuse Christians of worshipping three gods. Many who have been brought up in the Christian Church do not attempt to form any clear conception of what is meant by the Trinity. They ignore the problem. As Christians we repeat the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in God the Father, . . . and in Jesus Christ His Son . . . I believe in the Holy Ghost," but without any clear conception of what we mean. We believe that God is one God, almighty, infinite and eternal; that Jesus Christ is God and that the Holy Spirit is God—three persons in one Godhead—but how to understand or explain it, we do not know.

The Bible clearly teaches that there is only one God. At the same time we read that Christ accepted the title God as synonymous with "The Son of God." When Thomas exclaimed to Him, "My Lord and my God," He uttered no word of rebuke or correction (John 20: 28). The Holy Spirit is also given the title and attributes of God. When Ananias lied about his offering, the apostle Peter said that he had lied "to the Holy Spirit"; that is, "to God" (Acts 5: 3, 4).

This truth that God exists as *one* God and yet in a threefold personality is a *mystery*. By this is meant,

not a mysterious, obscure perplexity, but "a fact formerly hidden from man's understanding and later revealed by God." This is not a conception that man would invent or discover unaided, but must be revealed by a divine illumination. In this respect, it is like our knowledge of the life beyond the grave; we may hope and guess as to its reality and nature, but we cannot *know* except by revelation.

What, then, shall we believe and understand about the Trinity? The Old Testament hints at this truth about the Godhead. In the first chapter of Genesis the dual and plural nouns and verbs are used with references to God. The term for God is "Elohim," a dual or plural form. God said, "Let *us* make man" (Genesis 1:26). Many times "the Spirit of God" is referred to as speaking and acting as God (Isaiah 61:1, etc.). The Old Testament also mentions frequently the "Angel of the Lord," or Captain of the host of the Lord, a divine personality who speaks and acts as God (Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 6:20-24). This Person is identified by many as the second Person of the Trinity, since He received worship and showed the characteristics of God.

In the New Testament the three Persons of the Trinity appear or are mentioned together, so that their distinctive personalities are evident. At the baptism of Jesus, the Father spoke, the Spirit descended, and Christ, the Son, was in the flesh being baptized (Mat. 3:16, 17). In connection with the birth of Jesus, the three persons are mentioned: God, the Father, who sent His Son, conceived by the power of the Spirit.

In the promises to His disciples, Jesus says that the Father will send the Spirit to testify of Christ the Son (John 15:26). The three persons of the Godhead are also repeatedly mentioned in the baptismal formula (Mat. 28:19) and in benedictions (2 Corinthians 13:14).

The members of the Trinity are often referred to in the writings of the apostles, men who were taught by Christ Himself concerning the Godhead. John says: "He [Jesus Christ] whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure" (John 3:34). In Hebrews we read: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God" (Hebrews 9:14; see also 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 5:7; Ephesians 4:4-6; and Romans 15:30).

This is a part of the revealed truth about the Trinity. Can we understand it? If not, that will be no evidence that it is not true. The Bible makes no attempt to explain the Trinity, but gives the important facts about the three Persons in the Godhead—the truth we need to know. God, in His Word, makes no effort to explain the universe, but He tells us what we need to know as to its origin, its relation to God and our relation to the world in which we live. There is much that is true, that we do not understand.

One of our greatest difficulties in understanding God is that we rate our intellectual ability too high when we think we can comprehend the infinite truths of God. He has given us minds with wonderful powers to think, to imagine, to discover, but they are finite. If

we could comprehend all of God, we would be mentally equal to God. Our minds are given us to enable us to apprehend much that we cannot comprehend; to discern revealed truths and their relation to our own lives. Many a child can apprehend a father's statement about fire, electricity or light who cannot comprehend the nature or all the laws of these phenomena. It is not at all necessary for us to understand all about God as a Trinity in order that we may know Him as Heavenly Father, as the eternal Son and Saviour and as the Holy Spirit, The Revealer and Sanctifier. We may not know all about the sun in the heavens in order to know and receive the benefits from the sun as the light-giver, as the great dispenser of warmth and as producing wonderful chemical effects by its actinic rays. We do not need to know all about the nature of electricity in order to have a practical knowledge that will enable us to light our homes, cook our food, perform laboratory experiments, send messages over the wire or hear music by the radio.

No, we cannot understand all the wonders of the infinite God, but we can understand enough to believe and to receive all the benefits of belief, so that we may obey the laws and live the life of God.

Is not our greatest difficulty in understanding the Trinity due to our failure to think of God as infinite Spirit? We are so accustomed to think of personality incarnate in human form, with all its limitations, that we cannot conceive of personality not so embodied. So far as we know, spirit can take many forms and still retain personal attributes. If we could know all

that is involved in the conception of God as Spirit, as an infinite Personality, as Love and Truth, as Light and Life, we might understand how God is one in a threefold, infinite personality.

It is not necessary for man to comprehend all that God is, nor is it possible with limited human intelligence. Is it not enough that God has declared Himself to be our infinite, loving Father, that He has manifested Himself in the flesh as our divine Saviour and that He is ever ready, as the Holy Spirit, to guide us unto all truth and to live in us in divine fellowship and power? All that God asks of us is to hear His Word, to believe Him and to obey Him. The Trinity is one of the truths that is spiritually discerned.

VIII

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

WHAT is it that makes the Bible the perpetual "best seller," the most widely distributed and best read book in the world? Last year over 35,000,000 copies of the Bible or portions of the Bible were printed and sold. It is printed in more languages than any other book—in over seven hundred languages and dialects. It is found in every land under the sun. It is read, not only by the highly educated and cultured, by many wealthy and influential men and women, but people of little intellectual education, the poor, the uncultured, those of low degree, the young and old, read it with great satisfaction. They read it, not once and put it aside as with other books, but they read it and study it over and over—some daily for fifty or sixty years. Men and women of highly trained intellects testify that they find new light and increased joy after reading it over hundreds of times. Of what other book is this true? Moreover, the Bible was not only the best seller the past year, but it has been such for the past one hundred years or more. Think of it; a book, the last of which was written over 1,800 years ago, in a foreign language and for a foreign people, that is still the most popular book in England and America. Why is this?

The Pocket Testament League alone has three million members who have expressed their purpose to

carry the New Testament with them habitually, to read it daily, to live by its teachings and to speak to others about it. These members include bankers, teachers, postmen, firemen, tradespeople, servants and masters, parents and children.

Moreover, think of the influence of the Bible on human life and thought—the books written about it, the sermons preached on it (at least 1,000,000 a year), the studies based on it, the pictures and poems of which this Book is the inspiration. What is the explanation?

Compare the Bible with other “sacred scriptures”—the ethics of Confucius, the Laws of Manu, the Upanishads, the Vedas, the Zendavesta, the Koran, the Book of Mormon. Multitudes venerate these and profess to follow their teachings. What is the difference, and why do we, as Christians, reject them, while we accept the Bible as unique in contents and authority, as our guide to belief and to life?

Some people—for example, H. G. Wells—have attempted to write a new Bible, more up-to-date, and prepared with the help of many expert scholars. Their books are neglected, but the Bible continues to be read. Why is this?

The Nature of the Bible

Ask any man you meet on the street what the Bible is. Some would call it a volume of Jewish and Christian history and teaching. The name means “Book.” It is also called the Scriptures or “Writings”; the Old and New Testaments—or “Covenants”; the Word (or Message) of God; the Law, Prophets, Psalms,

Gospel, Acts, Epistles and Book of Revelation. It is, in fact, a library of sixty-six booklets, originally written in three languages, by thirty-five or more authors, who lived in several different lands, at various times over a period of at least 1,500 years. This library includes law, history, biography, poetry, drama, sermons, letters, philosophy, morals, dreams and fables or parables. Among the authors are a prince, a king, a politician, a farmer, a shepherd, scribes, fishermen, scholars, preachers, a soldier, a lawyer and a physician.

And yet, with all this diversity, there is in the Bible as a whole, a wonderful unity. The theme throughout is *God's dealings with man*, His efforts to lead man to know Him and to adopt the right way of life. Here is also described man's response to God's efforts to influence him. The unity of the Bible is shown also in its consistent presentation of belief in only one God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe; it refers primarily to one people, the Hebrews, and to those who followed their Messiah, the Christians. It has a consistent standard, not based on philosophy or experimental human ethics, but on divine truth and life, based on the will of God. Throughout the Old and New Testaments runs the central theme of salvation from sin by faith and obedience. The Messiah who was promised in the Old Testament is presented in the New, in the flesh and in spirit.

It is claimed for the Bible that it is uniquely inspired by God Himself; not in a mechanical way, by dictation, like the Koran; not as a final authority on science, history and philosophy; not necessarily inerrant in its

present form, for it has passed through the hands of many copyists, and the originals have long since disappeared. Nevertheless, it is held to be uniquely inspired so that it is of final authority on all matters pertaining to God and His will; it shows the true way of life; it teaches truth and not error; its history is reliable; its teachings reveal facts and truths that man could not discover for himself without the direct aid of God. Its promises have been or will be fulfilled.

Are we to believe these claims for the Bible? Men differ as to their validity. It is of supreme importance that we decide whether we will accept or reject the Bible as true and authoritative for we are told that those who reject its teachings reject God. The Bible professes to teach us the secret of a successful life on earth and the only way to a happy experience with God through all eternity. The Bible has had too great influence, and is accepted by too many intelligent, high-principled people today, for us to ignore its claims.

Test the Claims of the Bible

We should be ready to test the value and the validity of the claims of the Bible by the same standards that we would apply to the Koran, or the Book of Mormon or any other book.

(1) We are naturally influenced in our attitude by noting the characters of those who accept and those who reject these claims.

(2) We must study its contents to discover the claims it makes for itself, the character of its teach-

ings, its uniqueness, its consistency, its moral and ethical tone.

(3) We must note carefully the influence that it has exerted in the history of nations and in the lives of individuals.

(4) The personal test of the truth or falsity of the Bible's claims is in the influence of its teachings in our own experience.

I. The Bible has for centuries been respected as the sacred book of Great Britain, of Europe and of America. These nations have not professed to follow its teachings fully, but they have held it to be authoritative in all matters of religion. The reverence in which the Bible has been held by mothers, by Christian teachers and ministers, and by many whom we have known in all walks of life, incline us to consider its claims sympathetically. Where this is not the case, the investigator will be unfavorably inclined toward the claims made for the Bible.

II. What claims does the Bible make for itself?

The Old Testament claims to be a history of God's dealings with a people whom He called out from idolatry and whom He sought to train in His laws in order that they might bring blessing to all mankind (Genesis 17:7-13).

It claims to reveal God and His will (Deut. 6:6-9).

It reveals man's weakness and sin and need of God.

It seeks to guide men in the right paths (Psalm 119; Joshua 1:8).

The Old Testament claims to have been written under special inspiration of God. The term "God

said," or its equivalent, is used over 2,600 times. (See Exodus 24:1-7.) The history, laws, psalms and prophecies (or sermons) are said to have been written by men, under special inspiration from God. (See Exodus 24:4; 34:28; Joshua 3:9; 2 Kings 17:13; Isaiah 34:16; 59:21; Zechariah 7:12; Psalm 78:1; Proverbs 6:23.)

The New Testament claims to give a true record of the earthly life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the application of His teachings by specially chosen, trained and inspired followers, the Apostles.

Christ himself endorsed the Old Testament, quoted it and lived in harmony with its teachings. He endorses its truth and authority. (Mat. 5:18; John 10:35; Luke 18:31-33; 24:25, 44; Mat. 22:31; 26:54.)

The Apostles, who wrote the Gospels, Acts and Epistles, endorsed the Old Testament. (Luke 3:4; Paul in Romans 3:2 and 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1; Peter in 2 Peter 1:21 and 3:2 and in Acts 1:16; 3:18.) See also 1 Corinthians 2:9-16.

Unique inspiration and authority is indicated for the New Testament in the promise of Christ that His Spirit would guide the writers (His Apostles) into all truth, would bring things to their remembrance and would show them things to come (John 15:26 and 16:13). Also the Apostles, themselves, claim to speak, in their writings, with divine authority. (See Paul in 1 Cor. 2:13; 14:31; 1 Thess. 2:13 and 4:

2; Peter in 2 Pet. 3:2 and John in 1 John 1:5 and Revelation 1:1.)

III. The information contained in the Bible concerning ancient history has been found to be wonderfully accurate and in conformity with monuments and records discovered in Babylon, Assyria, Palestine, Egypt and Asia Minor—the lands referred to in the Bible. (See “The Bible and the Monuments,” by Price, and similar volumes by Dr. Melvin G. Kyle and others.)

The ethical and moral teachings of the Bible are generally acknowledged to be the most wonderful and perfect that have ever appeared. They appeal to the best impulses in man and have been accepted as ideal by earnest, intelligent men and women of all nations. While the revelation of God becomes clearer and fuller as the Bible was progressively produced, the morals and teachings are of the highest character throughout—even though they were not obeyed.

A comparison with other “sacred books” reveals so vast a difference in favor of the Bible that it seems impossible for an unprejudiced reader to hesitate in saying which shows the greatest evidence of being truly inspired by God.

IV. While many men have ignored or opposed the Bible’s authority and others have criticized its contents and claims, as a whole the enemies of faith in the Bible and opponents of its way of life, incline men of high principles and ideals to take the opposite side. Murderers, thieves, selfish egotists, and those of

vicious life are not readers of the Bible or in favor of its teachings. Many attacks on the Bible can be traced to a desire to win applause or to a desire to disregard its teachings.

On the other hand, the influence of the Bible on human history is such as to promote faith in its authority and divine character. Note its influence on laws; on social reforms; on childhood; on womanhood; on education; on the abolition of slavery; on temperance; on marriage and the home; on peace; on industry and honesty; on philanthropy; on the purification of politics and of worship. Nations and communities have been uplifted, strengthened and made more intelligent in proportion as they have accepted and followed the teachings of the Bible. (Note the story of Pitcairn Island.)

Individuals have shown in their lives the beneficial influence of the Bible when it has been believed and followed. Note the lives of such men as St. Augustine, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, D. L. Moody, John G. Paton and of multitudes in every land by whom the Bible is accepted as the Book of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

V. Finally, the test of Christ, when truly applied, will, we believe, bring unshakable conviction: "If any man will to do . . . he shall know." The diligent study of the Bible, with prayer for God's guidance, and an earnest desire to know in order to do, has convinced many an honest doubter that the Bible is in truth the authoritative revelation of God and of His

will for men. Some Indian Christians, when asked the benefits of Bible study, gave the following testimonies:

"In it Christ speaks to me as a friend and teacher." "It satisfies my spirit with the water of life." "It purifies my heart and helps me to live right." "It gives food to my soul and gives me strength." "It is my great teacher and gives me light." "It brings me into sympathy with God's love." "It is my sword in warfare against evil." "It prepares me for eternal life with God."

Summary

We believe that the Bible

1. Gives the true revelation of God — finally in Christ.
2. Shows the true way of life for men on earth.
3. Clearly reveals God's will for men.
4. Shows how men are saved from sin and its consequences.
5. Makes clear the immortality of the soul, and the way to attain that immortality.
6. Is the most wonderful and immortal book in the world.
7. Was written by men especially guided by the Spirit of God, so that they were kept from essential error and declared truth that could not be known certainly through human philosophy or experience.

We believe this because

1. The Bible is in harmony with the best attested discoveries of history, philosophy and experience.
2. The Bible is consistent in its contents and claims

and shows itself to be a most wonderful book in its diversity and unity, its moral and spiritual teachings.

3. Jesus Christ accepted and confirmed the Old Testament and promised His disciples especial help in writing the New Testament. The Apostles also confirmed this.

4. The history of the Bible has been remarkable in its preparation and preservation and in the amount of scholarship devoted to its study and confirmation.

5. The influence of the Bible on history, on communities, where it has been accepted as the rule of life, and on individuals who have believed and followed it, attest its truth.

IX

SIN — FACT OR FICTION?

ARE you a criminal? Are you a sinner? What is the difference? Can a dog sin, or an imbecile? How would you explain "sin" to a child or a savage?

When "sin" is mentioned, do you think of such acts as robbery, murder, adultery, boot-legging, perjury? These are crimes, but they are also sins. Under this term do you also include a spirit of rebellion against God's will, idolatry, covetousness, deceit, envy, pride, hatred, impure thoughts, disobedience to parents, harmful gossip, suicide, disregard of God's Day, neglect of God's Word, neglect of child training, distrust of God, a failure to give God His due in offerings and in service, failure to witness to God, refusal to believe in and follow Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of men?

Crime refers to a human being's guilt or innocence before the bar of man; sin indicates his position before the bar of God. A man may break human laws without being guilty of sin—as, for example, the law requiring worship of Nebuchadnezzar's image in Babylon. A man may sin and still be guiltless before human courts—as, for example, when a man rejects Jesus Christ.

The Nature of Sin

A crime is a transgression of the recognized laws and rights of society; a sin is a departure from the way of God. Human laws govern a man's relation to his neighbor and are made to regulate business, health, traffic, politics. God's laws are based on God's nature, and refer to the relation of man to God, and his fellow men. They govern the development of man's character and determine his destiny. A dog cannot sin, because a beast has no consciousness of God. An imbecile cannot sin, since he cannot understand God's spiritual laws.

The idea of "sin" and the "guilt of sin" is unpopular in the present day. Whole schools of thought deny that there is such a thing as sin. They admit mistakes of judgment and foolish acts, but they deny any inherent evil or moral quality in our acts or thoughts. According to this philosophy, why should not a man commit suicide if he becomes "weary of life"? Why should certain words and deeds be considered morally wrong and others right? Why should certain thoughts and desires be condemned as sinful? If each man, woman and child is to be the judge of right and wrong, clearly there can be no common standard; all will be confusion. Such independence destroys liberty. It produces the condition that prevailed in the days of the Judges in Israel, when "each man did that which was right in his own eyes," but none did that which was right in the eyes of God. The result was anarchy, crime and degeneration. We see the same condition today.

First, then, we believe that "sin" describes an act or thought or attitude that is contrary to the nature and will of God. Sin exists because God exists. The Creator knows what is best for man, and He has the right to rule man's life; He alone can set the absolute standards of right and wrong, of good and evil; He has revealed those standards in His Word; He has revealed His character in Christ; He has revealed the Way of Life for man in the Gospel. Consciously to depart from God and His will is sin.

Some religions set up standards that seem absurd to intelligent Christians. They condemn the destruction of any form of life as sin and count adultery and lying as less sinful than the killing of a cow or the destruction of injurious insects. They teach that the failure to offer sacrifice to an evil spirit is more sinful than robbery or suicide. Clearly the standard by which acts and thoughts are to be judged must be found outside of man. God is the Law-giver and Judge of sin. Through His prophets and through His Son, He has revealed its nature, its cause, its consequence and the remedy. If we cannot trust this revelation, then we have no reliable standard. Then each race, each nation, each religion, each individual must judge for himself. But we *have* a divine revelation in the Bible—one that has been tested and found true through centuries of experience, in all nations and lands, among all classes and all ages.

The Universality of Sin

No race and no individual is free from sin as it has been defined (Romans 3:19-23). None can plead "not guilty" before God. Every mouth is stopped. Though some, in their pride, may claim sinlessness, their neighbors will not support the claim. Even though men may abstain from outward sin, the Searcher of hearts sees the pride and evil within. One sin makes a man a sinner (James 2:10).

God's View of Sin

The Biblical words for sin signify—injury, hurt to the character and soul; transgression of God's law; failure to come up to His requirements. Note the Bible definitions:

(1) 1 John 3:4—"Sin is the transgression of the law." It is a reaching out for something forbidden; an over-stepping of the divinely prescribed bounds.

(2) James 4:17—"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." It is a failure to live up to the light and the privileges and responsibilities that God has given us.

(3) Romans 14:23—"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." It is going contrary to our enlightened convictions as to right and wrong. In this sense, believing a thing to be wrong, makes it wrong—for *me*—as, for instance, eating meat offered to idols or other acts that cause the weak to stumble and fall.

(4) Matthew 18:6—"Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me." It is a sin to lead astray others who look to us for guidance—as

when parents and teachers mislead little children or pupils and cause them to lose faith in God or Christ.

(5) John 16:8, 9—"He will reprove the world of sin . . . because they believe not on me." A refusal to accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as Saviour, when He is so revealed, is sin.

Thus, in God's view, sin goes deeper than crime, for it has to do not only with acts but our attitude toward God. (Luke 16:15.) He does not distinguish between great and little sins, though some sins are more glaring and far-reaching in their consequences than are others. In the Old Testament, the word "iniquity" is used over 250 times; "guilt" 27; "transgression" 175; "lies," "error" or "failure" 420 times. In the New Testament, "sin" is described as failure over 200 times and "transgression" is used only 15 times.

The Cause of Sin

According to the revelation of God, man was created innocent, sinless. He was given the power of choice. The right way, the loving and beneficent will of God was made known to him, but he rebelled against it and chose to follow his own will. This was sin. Man was led into it by Satan, the evil spirit, who put into man's mind the thought of rebellion. Ever since, man's tendency to sin has increased and his power to resist has decreased. (See Genesis 2 and 3 for a study of sin, its cause, consequences and remedy.)

In spite of all warnings against sin and its consequences; in spite of the experience that sin brings weakness, sorrow and death; in spite of the recog-

nized rewards of virtues—still *men persist in sinning*, not once or twice in a lifetime, but daily, hourly, from early years up to old age. No explanation seems to account for man's persistent, constant falling into sin except the explanation offered in God's Word; namely, that Satan, the adversary of God and man, is continually going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). The same devil that tempted Christ (Matthew 4:1-10) tempts all mankind.

Why should we believe in the existence of such a superhuman, evil spirit, called the devil and Satan? Here are some reasons:

(1) The general readiness of men, women and children to sin in spite of all warnings as to its evil effects, and all inducements to right doing.

(2) The widespread belief in evil spirits among all primitive peoples. Such belief would seem to have some basis.

(3) Human experience of temptation, apart from personal appetites and preferences.

(4) The testimony of the prophets and apostles. (Genesis 3:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Psalm 109:6; Acts 5:3.)

(5) The testimony of Christ. He was without sin but He was tempted. He spoke clearly of Satan, or the devil, as a personality, a tempter, one who seeks to enslave and must be overcome. (See Matthew 4:1; 13:39; Luke 13:16; 22:31; John 8:44.)

Another cause of sin is found in the inclinations of

man to follow his own desires, irrespective of what is right and best, and regardless of the will of God. (James 1:14.)

The Consequences of Sin

(Romans 6:23.) "The wages of sin is death." This was the warning given to the first human sinner (Genesis 2:17). It has been the experience of the race (James 1:15). It is the destiny predicted for all unforgiven and unredeemed sinners (Revelation 20:11-14). The wages of sin may be paid in instalments, but they must be paid. They include:

(1) Unhappiness, by destroying harmony with God and man and within one's self.

(2) Weakness, through the breaking of physical and spiritual laws (Proverbs 4:22, 23).

(3) Failure and bondage to hurtful habits (John 8:34).

(4) Alienation and separation from God, and a consequent inability to secure His help.

(5) Loss of inclination to follow the right or to desire the right.

(6) Injury to others through evil example.

(7) Death of the spiritual life.

These are the steps in temptation's downward stairway. A man may be tempted without sin, but listening to the tempter, considering the allurements and dallying with temptation is sin, for it is the gateway to the path of evil deeds. (Read Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; John 8:21-24, 34-36, 44-47.)

Man's view of sin leads him to excuse it as a human

weakness, and as something that may be overlooked, if it does not bring serious consequences to others. Men excuse a gambler if his gambling does not involve unwarranted losses or lead to theft; immorality is often excused if it does not bring distress to the innocent; deceit is excused by men when not discovered and not involving infractions of human laws. When man's heart has been touched by the Spirit of God, his view of sin is changed, as is shown in the Fifty-first Psalm.

God's view of sin is clearly revealed in the prophecy of Hosea and by Jesus in the parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32). It involves a lack of regard for God's love and His law and a departure from Him. When man looks upon sin, he is apt to see **only the** consequences to society and perchance to himself and those dear to him. When God looks upon sin, it is with the heart of a father who sees the injury to his child. One father said, "I have always dreaded and disliked tuberculosis as a danger to be avoided, but when tuberculosis took hold of my beloved child and I saw her weaken and suffer and die, then I came to hate tuberculosis and to feel that I would do all in my power to stamp it out."

Thus God, the loving Heavenly Father, feels toward sin and the sinner. He has revealed this by what He has done and is doing to save His children from the ravages of sin.

X

HOW MEN ARE SAVED

WHAT happened to Jerry McAuley, the river thief, to change him into a leader of work to rescue other thieves and drunkards? What changed Africaner, "The Hottentot Terror," into a friend of Christ and a foe of evil? What changed Sadhu Sundar Singh from a restless Sikh, a seeker after light and a foe of Christianity, into a faithful follower of Christ, ready to suffer and die for Him?

These men, and countless others in every land, to-day and during the past nineteen hundred years would say that they had been "saved." What do they mean? What did salvation mean to the Samaritan woman and to the thief on the cross? "Saved" by whom? What was the evidence? What was the process? For what purpose were they "saved"? Do all men need to be "saved" or only those who have sunk deep into sin? Is this experience for all or only for a favored few?

If it is true, as Christ teaches, that *all* have sinned, that all are suffering from the destructive effects of sin, if all are worthy of death because of their sin, then evidently all need in some way to be saved from sin and its consequences.

It requires no argument to prove that all men and women have failed to keep God's laws and should expect to suffer the penalty. They need some power to help them overcome their evil tendencies, to help them

stem the tide, to turn them about in the opposite direction from that in which they are headed; they need to be forgiven, and to be rescued from the consequences of wrongdoing.

Human Ways of Escape

There are various remedies or ways of escape suggested by human philosophies and by other religions.

1. Spirit worshippers say: "Make sacrifices to propitiate evil spirits."

2. Romans said: "Be strong; set up a powerful state; make laws to govern mankind."

3. The Greeks said: "Let the beautiful inspire you; study philosophy; let the intellect be supreme."

4. The orthodox Jews say: "Keep the laws of God, the Almighty Creator; observe His feasts and sacrifices."

5. The Hindus say: "Worship the gods and follow their example; surrender yourself to them even though it involves uncleanness and cruelty."

6. Confucius said: "Observe the ethical code and study the laws of society, of the family and of the State."

7. Mohammed said: "Practice the five duties—recite the creed; pray five times a day; give alms; observe the feasts; make a pilgrimage to Mecca."

8. Materialists say: "Get money and power; work to save yourself from anything you consider evil; there is no future penalty for sin."

9. Certain philosophers today say: "Observe the forms of faith and of worship if you will; there is

no real evil; no sin; no death. These are only human distinctions."

10. Atheistic Communists say: "Reform society and industry; put down the rich and let the workers rule the world; break the restraints of religion and establish the will of the proletariat."

Christ's Way of Salvation

The whole Bible is devoted to making clear God's view of the cause and results of sin and to showing His way of escape from sin and its consequences. Since He is the Creator and Ruler of the universe His view must be true.

1. JESUS CHRIST SAVES FROM WHAT?

From sinning, Mat. 1:21. From weakness and failure, Prov. 13:6; 22:8; Gal. 6:8; Rev. 3:17-20. From evil desires and habits, Titus 3:3-5; Prov. 1:30, 31. From displeasing and dishonoring God, Col. 1:21. From spiritual death and separation from God, Mat. 18:11; Eph. 2:1-17; 2 Peter 3:9.

2. THE METHOD OF SALVATION BY CHRIST

Some words show the steps and accompaniments of salvation.

Repentance means "thinking it over"; a change of mind about God, yourself, your life, your relation to God.

Remorse means a "gnawing" regret for past actions and their consequences.

Conversion means a "turning around" to go in an-

other direction; a forsaking of sin and a turning toward God rather than away from God.

Redemption means a "payment" to release a debtor, setting him free from the penalty incurred.

Salvation means a "saving" of one's life from failure, from ruin, from the sorrow and death that are involved in separation from God.

We are not saved by good works, for none can be perfect enough to merit salvation (Eph. 2: 8, 9).

We are not saved merely by knowledge, the acceptance of a fact (Jas. 2: 19).

We are not saved by claiming to be followers of God or Jesus Christ (Mat. 7: 21).

We are saved only by Jesus Christ Himself (Luke 19: 10; 1 John 5: 12); by believing in Him and His claims (Acts 16: 31); and by a surrender of self and all that we are and have to Him as Son of God, Saviour and Lord (John 5: 40; 10: 9). The Bible clearly teaches this in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelation. (Luke 19: 10; Acts 16: 31; 1 Tim. 1: 15; 1 John 5: 11; Rev. 7: 14.)

There is *no other way* of salvation that God has revealed except through Christ (Acts 4: 12).

How God, through Jesus Christ, saves us is not fully revealed and is not our responsibility. It is sufficient to know that *He does save* us if we fulfil the simple conditions. The Bible teaches us, however, that God's love for us is the motive (Mat. 18: 14; John 3: 16; 1 Tim. 2: 3-6; Isaiah 53: 4-8; Mat. 26: 28; John 12: 32); Christ's death on the Cross is the method of redemption (1 Cor. 15: 3; 1 Peter 1: 19);

faith in Christ is the means by which we receive the benefit of His death for us (John 3:16; Rom. 10:9); Godly, righteous, loving lives are the result that God expects from those who are redeemed from death (Col. 3:1).

God's Part and Man's Part

In saving a sick man's life, there must be coöperation between the doctor and the patient; so, in saving man from spiritual death, there must be coöperation between God in Christ and man, the sinner.

God's part in man's salvation is (1) to see man's need and to desire his rescue (Luke 19:10); (2) to provide and offer the remedy (Psalm 98:2, 3, and John 3:17); (3) to make the remedy effective when accepted (Rom. 1:16; 1 John 5:11-19); (4) to strengthen and perfect those who are saved (1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 4:7; Phil. 1:6); (5) to prepare a Home for His children (John 14:2; 1 Thes. 4:17).

Man's part is (1) to realize his need for God's salvation and to desire what God can give (Amos 5:4; Mat. 11:28); (2) to believe and accept God's offer (John 5:40; Eph. 2:8); (3) to use the new life imparted and the means of grace provided (John 15:4, 5; Eph. 4:7-16); (4) to glorify God with the new life (1 Peter 2:9-13); (5) to prepare for the Home with God (Rev. 7:14).

Faith is required; it is not a question of *how much* faith, but of the reality of our faith. All that is needed is enough faith to take God at His word. Life

is a gift, and man needs enough faith to receive the gift and to use it (Eph. 2:8; Titus 3:5).

The Purpose of Salvation

For what purpose and to what destiny are we saved?

“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ” (John 10:28; Rom. 6:23). With this gift comes freedom from the burden of sin (Rom. 6:18); a new sense of fellowship with God (1 John 1:3); a new joy in Christlike life and service (Rom. 15:13); a new power to achieve worth-while and abiding results (Acts 1:8); a new purpose in life and a new courage and calmness in the face of danger and physical death (Mat. 10:26-31; Acts 4:29).

God desires the salvation of all men (Mat. 18:14 and 1 Tim. 2:3-6; 2 Peter 3:9).

If we are not saved, it is our own fault or the fault of those who have failed to tell us the Good News (Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:13; John 5:40 and 6:37).

Rejection of God's offer (Heb. 2:3) is an insult to God; it wounds His father-love; it makes Christ's death on the Cross so far ineffective; it brings eternal ruin to those who reject, and untold loss to others whom they might have helped to save.

Men divide humanity into various groups; rich and poor, learned and ignorant, tall and short, young and old, and by races, nations, occupations and politics. God divides them into only two classes; the lost and the saved; the “sheep” and the “goats”; the wise and the foolish; those who are His and those who are not. You can choose the class to which you will belong.

Salvation Through Christ

We believe in salvation from sin and eternal death through Christ—

1. Because we believe in Christ. He knows the results of man's sin. He knows the failure of all man's efforts to save himself; He knows the futility of all other offers of escape from sin and its consequences. He knows how man may be and must be saved. He is able to save. He knows that the way He has made possible and has offered to man is adequate. He knows that countless men, women and children have been saved, and that others are being saved by His way (Rom. 11:33; Heb. 4:13).

2. Because hundreds — yes, thousands — of men, women and children have accepted God's plan and have shown the evidences of being saved from sin and its consequences. Among these are the apostle Paul, the Philippian jailer, St. Augustine, Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, John Vassar, George Müller, John S. Huyler, William Borden, Pastor Hsi, Paul Kana-mori, Pandita Ramabai and Michael Mansur. Read the story of "Down in Water Street," "Twice Born Men" and countless other reliable testimonies.

3. Because of personal experience. God has fulfilled His promises; has changed my heart; has given new peace, new joy, new courage, new aspirations, new power that are foretastes of the Life Beyond. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

God's Plan of Salvation

Translated from the Latin (Author Unknown)

GOD IS

<i>A Just Judge,</i> Who cannot clear the guilty.	<i>A Holy God,</i> Who cannot associate with the impure,
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BUT WE ARE

Guilty.	Impure.
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THEREFORE TO STAND

In the Judgment,	In the Presence Chamber,
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WE NEED TO BE

Justified; <i>i. e.</i>, pronounced guilt- less.	Sanctified; <i>i. e.</i>, made holy.
---	---

THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE BY

The Righteousness of Christ imputed to us,	The Holiness of Christ imparted to us,
---	---

WHICH IS

Christ's work for us. Passive and active. Suffering and serving.	Christ's work <i>in</i> us. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
---	--

1. The originating cause is the Love of God the Father.

2. The procuring cause is the Merit of Christ the Son.

3. The efficient cause is the Operation of the Holy Spirit.

4. The instrumental cause is the Word of God.

5. The receptive cause is the Faith of Man.

THE RESULT

We are

Justified

1. From all guilt.

2. By one act.

3. Perfect through
faith.

Sanctified

1. In the whole man.

2. A progressive act.

3. Perfected only here-
after.

AMEN.

XI

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

ARE you a Christian? How do you know? How do others know whether or not you are a Christian? They cannot tell by the color of your skin, by the language you speak, by the clothes you wear—or leave off. A man is a Hindu because he is born into a family of Hindus—but that is not true of a Christian. A man shows himself to be a good Mohammedan by observing the five religious practices, but a man may observe all the Christian rites and not be a Christian.

How, then, are we to distinguish a Christian from a non-Christian? We may say truly that the first distinctive mark of a Christian is his claim to believe in and to follow Jesus Christ as divine Lord and Saviour. But that is not enough. There is a vast variety of professing Christians in the world. In many lands, all Americans and Europeans are called Christians—to the great detriment of the cause of Christ, for many nominal Christians bring discredit and disgrace on the Name.

Professing to be a follower of Christ is not enough. If a man claims to be converted by accepting Christ, what comes next? Conversion is not the end of the Christian life, but the beginning. What are its outward signs and its roots; what is the inward secret of a truly Christian life? A Christian must not be

a Christian only in fair weather and when there is no opposition but he must show Christian character and conduct in the midst of the fiercest trials, the most bitter disappointment and persecution.

First, we believe that *there is a Christian life* and conduct that is different from any other life. Second, we believe that this life is worth living, and is *the only life* that brings true satisfaction and the truly fruitful service. Third, we believe that it is possible for every Christian to live this life on earth by observing certain clearly defined conditions.

1. The Christian Life

As vegetable life and the life of beasts is distinct from human life, so the Christian life is as different from ordinary human existence as is the life of man from that of a worm. (Read John 1 : 12 and 13 and 3 : 6.) The New Testament clearly distinguishes between the "natural man" (a mere human), the "carnal man" (who puts the flesh or self uppermost), and the "spiritual man" (one who is empowered, enlightened and led by the Spirit of God). (Read 1 Corinthians 2 : 14 and 3 : 1.) The early Christians were known by many names: "disciples," or learners in the school of Christ; "saints," or those set apart for God; the people of "the way," or followers of Jesus; and, finally, as Christ-men, those who showed themselves to be identified with Him. The true essence of the Christian life is expressed by Paul in his letter to the Philippians, 1 : 21: "To me to live is Christ."

The natural man is a normal human being, born of

human parents. He may have a well-developed body, may be highly educated, have a warm heart and take a high place among men, but at the same time, spiritually he may be as dead as a stone. His tastes and ambitions are confined to this world. His standards are human and he has no clear consciousness of God and no contacts with superhuman realities—they are foolishness to him. Such are some pugilists, some statesmen, scientists, historians and some church members.

The carnal man may recognize the reality of God, may believe in Christ, in the Bible and in immortality, but he lives most consciously in the things of the flesh. His worldly ambitions, his fleshly appetites and his activities have most largely to do with material and temporal things. He may be a professing Christian or even a minister of the Gospel, but self and the flesh are uppermost so that the spirit is kept under. (See Romans 8:12-14.)

The spiritual man, on the other hand, is one who is born of the Spirit (John 3:5), lives in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25), is led by the Spirit (Galatians 5:18), and bears the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Here is the explanation of the difference between various types of men and women in the Church and out. The difference can be accounted for in no other way.

2. Is Life Worth Living?

We sometimes hear people ask the question: Is life worth living? What sort of a life? Is *your* life

worth living? That depends on what makes up your life. Is it chiefly physical existence and appetites, or mental activity; is it the pursuit of money and material things, or business pursuits; is it earthly preferments? There is little wonder that men and women are not truly satisfied with the pursuit of health, pleasure, of art, of comfort, of human honors. These things pass away. What is there in *your* life and service that will abide forever? Ask John Hus, Raymond Lull, D. L. Moody, Charles H. Spurgeon, Alexander Mackay; ask the Apostle Paul; ask Jesus Christ—what made their lives unique and worth living? D. L. Moody asked to have put on his tombstone “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever” (1 John 2:17).

What are the characteristics of the Christian life? What are its outward signs? Most of the New Testament epistles were written to show how a Christian is to be different from others. The inward characteristics are vital faith; love (John 13:35 and 1 Cor. 13); joy (John 15:11); peace (John 14:27); hope (Rom. 8:24). The fruit of the Spirit is described in Galatians 5:22, 23. It is a life of sacrificial service for others (Galatians 6:2), of obedience to God (1 John 5:3), and of victory.

The Apostle Paul, the martyr Stephen, John the Beloved, and multitudes of men and women of today would be recognized as Christians in whatever environment they might be placed, whether favorable or antagonistic.

3. The Life of Victory

This life of victory is possible. It is difficult, especially for those who seek to serve "two masters"—to live both for the flesh and for the Spirit. The chief hindrances are (1) ignorance; (2) natural weakness of will; (3) pride and wilfulness; (4) self-indulgence; (5) fear of others and of the consequences; (6) evil companionships and example. It is not easy to follow the Christian way of life in this world. Some are discouraged and give up the struggle. The "Sermon on the Mount" presents an ideal, but those who try to follow it in their own strength soon find it impossible. More is needed than good advice. The distinguishing characteristic of Christianity is that Christ and His Spirit give men *power* to do what is humanly impossible.

The Apostle Paul learned some of the secrets of this life (Philippians 4:12 and 13), and disclosed the secret to all Christians. The Keswick Movement in England, and a similar one in America, are devoted to teaching Christians this secret of a life of victory, a life of power, a life of joy, a Spirit-filled life in the midst of all sorts of circumstances. Any one should be able to stand in smooth seas, in times of peace. What is the secret of victory when sorrow, temptation and disaster overtake one? What is the secret of joy amid the fires of persecution and of martyrdom? Such are the testing times for a Christian. The secret is found in a life "hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3), obtained through complete sur-

render of the whole being and destiny to the will of God.

Such a Christian life is cultivated by:

(1) The study of God's Word to discover His will (2 Timothy 3:16).

(2) Prayer to learn the meaning of that will in personal life (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

(3) The guidance of the Holy Spirit as promised (John 16:13).

(4) Sacrificial service for others in the name and power of Christ (Romans 12:1).

(5) Fellowship with other followers of Christ, by comradeship, by reading and by public worship.

The Christian life is a triangle, for a man stands in relation to God and to his brother man, who also is related to God.

A Summary

The Christian life is different from any other life, however normal and upright that life may be, because

1. It is the life of God implanted in the human soul, as a gift of God in response to a man's faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of "His people," and through surrender to His control.

2. This life is nourished by living contact with Christ through the Spirit of God—by an inflowing of His spiritual power, by feeding on His Word, and by believing prayer (John 15:4).

3. The one aim of this life is to fulfil the will of God, to conform to His standards and to serve Him in whatever sphere He may designate.

4. This is a life of progress toward perfection, toward likeness to Christ in character, in desires and in achievements.

5. The destiny of this life is one-ness with Christ; the Christian is a joint-heir with Him and in His service and at Home with Him throughout eternity.

XII

WHY WORK?

MOST of the adult men and women of the world work; millions of children also toil daily in homes or factories or fields. Many do not want to work, because they are ill or lazy, yet those "out-of-work" are generally considered unfortunate.

Why do men and women and children work? What is work? What work is worth while? How may one find the work to which he or she is best adapted? How shall we measure success in work?

1. What Is Work?

What is work as distinguished from play and other activities? Is reading work? Yes, for a student or proof reader, but not for one who seeks relaxation in a novel. Is walking work? Yes, for a postman. Is taking part in a drama work? That depends on whether it is a profession or a diversion. Is talking work? Not at an afternoon tea, but it is counted work by a lawyer or lecturer. For years, the Chinese could not understand why British and American men played tennis. Why did they not make servants play the game while the masters amused themselves betting on the outcome?

What then is work? Do animals, such as bees and worms, work? Do machines work? Does God work?

We may define work as "a conscious expenditure

of energy for some useful purpose other than pleasure." Thus work includes physical toil with a purpose or mental exercise with a constructive aim. Prayer may be labor (Colossians 4:12); to love may involve labor (1 Thess. 1:3; Hebrews 6:10) and even the exercise of faith may be work (John 6:29). God works, Jesus Christ worked (John 5:17), and His creatures work. Animals and insects work by instinct; machines accomplish work, not of their own volition but because some one has designed them to do constructive service for man.

2. Why Do Men and Women Work?

Some labor only under compulsion—as slaves or children in domestic and industrial slavery. Others work to attain a goal, an ambition, like many scientists. Some work from habit, because they would be miserable if unemployed. Multitudes work only for money and the things that money can buy—such are mercenary servants, like the soldiers who will fight in any cause, but only for pay. Others work for love, as is proved by the finest teachers and patriots, the true ministers and missionaries, the ideal wives, husbands and parents. They may desire money as a return for their labor, but it is only that the money may be used in the service of those whom they love. Their service is not for sale to the highest bidder, and they would rather work without wages to serve their loved ones than to receive large wages in a loveless task. When a friend asked William Carey why he neglected his business in order to preach the Gospel, he replied,

"My business is the extension of the Kingdom of God. I only cobble shoes to pay expenses."

3. What Work Is Worth While?

All work is a blessing. Useful employment develops body, mind and character. Idleness, or the mere pursuit of pleasure, produces flabbiness, makes one lose ambition, and detracts from strength of purpose and a definite goal. Labor for material things only is not worth while (John 6:27). Sin brought a curse because an antagonistic element entered into man's experience which he was obliged to overcome by the sweat of his brow (Genesis 3:17-19). The sentence of God that man must work was not a curse, but a blessing. It was a means by which he might overcome the curse brought by sin, the curse that makes weeds grow more naturally and luxuriantly than grain; that influences man to choose evil more naturally than to follow the good; that makes the downward, easy road more attractive to the natural man than is the upward and difficult path.

The blessings of work, a useful, purposeful employment, are seen in its development of capabilities, the warding off of many temptations, the helpful service to others, the general progress that comes from discoveries and inventions; in the personal satisfaction to the worker in worth-while tasks. The worker is coöperating with God in the service of man and in the development of the world.

There is sufficient work in the world for all. The opportunity and need is still unlimited. There is a

variety of tasks sufficient to meet all talents and all capabilities in God-given tasks. That all do not find their natural place in the work of the world is due to human ignorance, laziness, selfishness and wilfulness. We believe that God has a work for every one to do (Mark 13:34; Galatians 6:4; Ephesians 2:10; Revelation 22:12).

What work is worth while for a locomotive? Not the pulling of a toy train, but something worthy of its great power. This power may be used to destroy a building or to wreck a train, but the worth-while work is that for which the maker designed it—a constructive task for man's benefit. Man is endowed with marvelous powers which may rest dormant, may be employed in useless expenditure of energy, may be used for destruction, or may be made a blessing to mankind. Even evil traits and evil deeds represent some good trait misdirected or some good power misapplied.

Worth-while work for men and women is, therefore, *purposeful expenditure of energy in harmony with the will of God*. To discover His plan for man and for the universe and to work in line with it, in tasks little or great, obscure or in the public eye, makes any task a joy and assures success (John 4:34; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Hebrews 10:7; 1 John 2:17). Such work is not in vain, is not fruitless because it is "in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). In whatever work the Christian is engaged, he may be content if he is truly serving Christ (Colossians 3:23, 24).

The aim, the materials, the master under whom we

work determines the value and the satisfaction experienced in the task. Three stone-cutters may be doing the same kind of work, and with equal skill, but it makes a tremendous difference whether they are working only for money, from necessity, or with an eye to the glory and usefulness of the finished cathedral. Three men may be engaged in the same employment, but it makes a great difference if they are only mercenaries, are slaves without vision, or realize that they are colaborers with God in His marvelous and inspiring work of bringing the world into harmony with His ideals. This divine purpose includes the development of individual men, women and children into Christlikeness — well-rounded and full grown; the transforming of society into the Kingdom of God; and the subjugation or development of animal and material creation so that they may minister to the highest needs of mankind.

From this standpoint, is it worth while to devote all one's life to professional baseball; to prize-fighting; to accumulating wealth; to the writing of popular novels; to world conquest; to arctic exploration; to study of insects; to science; to teaching; nursing and medical practice; to home-making; to the ministry of the Gospel; to world-wide evangelism?

4. How Choose a Life-Work?

The greatest question that confronts any one is in the choice of a life with or without Christ; next in importance comes the choice of a life-work and the choice of a life-partner. The choice of a life-work involves many considerations:

(1) It should be constructive and honorable—for the benefit, not to the detriment of mankind. This eliminates many kinds of employment.

(2) It should take into account the individual's special talents. "To every man his work" (Mark 13: 34). One calling is not necessarily better than another, provided that we are in the calling to which God has appointed us (1 Cor. 7:20, 24). A man called to be a good blacksmith should not be dissatisfied because he is not a college professor.

(3) It should meet a real need and an opportunity. The best servant of God is he who sees the open door, hears God's call and takes up the work to which his talents fit him, however obscure the field, however humble the task.

(4) Of two or more possible and suitable lines of service open, the one should be followed that is most constructive and that gives the largest opportunity for abiding fruitage. There should be no bickering over wages (Mat. 20: 1-16), or preferment (Luke 22: 24); nor should a man decline a task (like Moses) because it is too great. Such false humility means, in reality, a lack of faith in God.

(5) When God calls a man, He will prepare the field (Eph. 2:10), as well as the servant. God has a plan for the world and has made man, if obedient, to fit into that plan. He has called His servants to partnership (1 John 1:3) and is ready to reveal His plan to those who seek to know and to coöperate with Him and who will yield to Him the fruits (Mat. 21:

33-42). It is a great inspiration to serve under a Master who is certain of the success of His program.

(6) To know my place in God's plan, I must, therefore, study His Word, must study His world and its needs, must give myself to prayer for the guidance of His Spirit (Acts 13:2).

(7) God's call should take the precedence of every personal ambition or desire and every other call to service. The fact that there is work still to be done in one field must not deafen us to a call of God to another more needy field (Acts 13:2).

Whatever the task may be by which we pay expenses, every Christian's chief work is to do the will of God and to win others to Him. Blacksmiths, farmers, carpenters, Pullman porters, bankers, merchants, housemaids have been and are first of all Christian workers. In the early days of the Church, all the disciples were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4).

How Measure Success in Work?

A thief, a bootlegger, a warrior, a politician, a statesman, a gambler, a merchant, a physician and a Christian minister will view success differently. Man's view is apt to put the temporal before the eternal and the material before the spiritual. God's view of success considers the ultimate outcome, the contribution made to men's real needs, the ability and fidelity of the servant, and the degree to which the service harmonizes with the whole divine program. A soldier may be brave, unselfish, and fight hard, and yet if he is not

in harmony with the whole plan of campaign he may be worse than a failure—he may injure the cause.

The secrets of success are (1) that a man have his right work and be going toward the right goal, for spiritual rather than for material ends; (2) that he be diligent and faithful; (3) that he be teachable—eager to learn from his Master; (4) that he coöperate with his Master's other servants and not introduce unfriendly rivalry; (5) that he exhibit courage and have faith in the ultimate successful outcome; (6) that he be ready to sacrifice himself for the cause; (7) that he depend on God's help, rather than on human wisdom and resources, to attain success.

The best methods, provided they are honoring to God, are those that produce the best results. The late Charles M. Alexander was taken to task after one of his services by a Christian who said: "I admire your spirit, Mr. Alexander, but I don't like the way you do your personal work." "Neither do I very well," replied Mr. Alexander, "how do you do it?" "Well, I, I, I," stammered the man, "I don't do it very much." "Well," said Mr. Alexander, "I like the way I *do* it better than the way you *don't* do it."

As to work, then, we believe that the real, worthwhile work of the world is all God's work; that He has a plan—a constructive program—for the good of mankind, and one in which each of His children and servants has a place; that, in whatever task or part of the vineyard we are employed, we are His partners and the successful outcome of the program is assured; finally, that if we are faithful and true to Him, the

results safely may be left in His hands. It is ours to plant good seed and to water the planting. It is His to give the increase in His own time and way. The one requirement for God's workers is faithfulness (1 Cor. 4:2).

The reward of such work may not be recognized by men, but is sure to be given when the King comes and distributes to every man according to his work (Mat. 16:27). The important aim to keep in view is not the approval of men, but the approval of God (2 Tim. 2:15). The time is coming when every one's work will be made manifest, of what sort it is, and if it will abide or be destroyed (1 Cor. 3:13). The one secret of success in life and in work is in doing the will of God (1 John 2:17).

XIII

THE VALUE OF MONEY

THERE are in America approximately eleven thousand millionaires and nearly a hundred men and women whose incomes amount to more than a million dollars a year. Are they rich? Would you like to have an income of a million? What would you do with it?

Some years ago, a young man, who had succeeded in building up a successful business, one New Year's Eve was handed a check representing his share of the year's profits. Without looking at the amount, the young man put the envelope in his pocket and went out to celebrate the evening with a group of friends. On his way uptown, he decided to look at the check and stopped under a lamppost to investigate. The size of the dividend startled him for it showed him to be already a rich man.

What would *you* have done if you had been in that young man's place? We know what many would have done—for they are doing it continually. They would have celebrated more extravagantly and perhaps more sinfully. What this young man did showed his caliber and his training. He realized the responsibility placed upon him for the proper use of wealth, that he was a steward and must some day give an account of his stewardship to God. He decided to give up his plans for the evening and to go home and pray with his

Christian mother for wisdom and strength to use the money in a way pleasing to God. That man was John S. Huyler, who became not only a millionaire candy manufacturer, but a great Christian philanthropist.

What is wealth? We think of the Rothchilds, and Rockefellers, of the Vanderbilts and steel magnates as wealthy. Would one of them be rich if he should be cast alone on a desert island? Is a man counted rich who has a million dollars but who is insane, or a life-term prisoner? What is the value of money to the miser, to the fool or to one who is ignorant of the fact that he possesses wealth? A man who is counted rich in Africa might be thought almost a pauper in New York.

What then is money? Whence comes its value? In different lands, at different periods, cowry shells or leather, feathers or cattle have been used as money. Today pieces of paper are money—also coins of gold, silver and copper, marked with a certain stamp.

Money may be defined as a *standard medium of exchange*—usually today with a government's stamp to guarantee its value.

Why Men Desire Money

Most men and women desire money, even if they are not eager to be rich. Why do we seek money? Some wish it for evil purposes—to pervert justice, for harmful self-indulgence, or to prosecute war. Others wish it for the good they can do; to supply the needs of life, for education and research, to carry on commerce, to promote culture and maintain gov-

ernment, to help the poor and to advance the Kingdom of God among men.

But many things are of more value than money; liberty, strength of character, wisdom, knowledge, health, peace, life, love, a clear conscience, immortality. For these a sane man will readily give up the money he possesses (Mat. 16:26).

Another practical definition of money is "*stored up power.*" It is like a battery that a man may charge by the expenditure of mental or physical energy, and may then put in a bank, invest in business, carry in his pocket or send out to the ends of the earth to work for him. This "stored up power," this potential energy, may be used for evil or for good, and so may be a blessing or a curse; it may be master or servant of man (Mat. 6:24).

The importance of money and other property to a man in his own development, in his relation to his fellowman and to God, is shown by the fact that Jesus refers to it more than to almost any other subject except sin and doing the will of God.

Money, like other material things, is neither good nor evil in itself; poverty is not inherently or universally a blessing as some religious sects seem to think, nor is wealth necessarily a curse. Like the Apostle Paul's thorn in the flesh, poverty may be a blessing if it leads to greater dependence on God and a manifestation of His grace. Like great physical and mental power, great wealth is a blessing if used for Godlike purposes.

Some Bible Teaching as to Property

1. All wealth and property belong to God (Psalm 50:12; and Haggai 2:8).

2. Man is put in the earth as a tenant of God; as a husbandman in a vineyard (Genesis 2:15; Mat. 21:33, 34).

3. All the material wealth of the world is of no value in comparison with a human soul (Mat. 16:26).

4. Material wealth is of value only and in proportion as it is used unselfishly in God's work to bless mankind (Mat. 6:19, 20 and 19:21).

5. All gifts or possessions are talents entrusted to men to be used as partners with God in His work. Every man will be called to give an account for the use of his talents (Mat. 25:14-30). The rewards will be distributed according to each man's faithfulness (Luke 16:1-13, and 1 Cor. 4:2).

Christ's Teaching in Regard to Money

1. Man is not to be a slave or servant of money and material things but an heir and servant of God (Mat. 6:24).

2. A man's value is not reckoned according to material wealth but according to his relation to God (Luke 12:15).

3. A man and his money both belong to God (Mat. 25).

4. In the getting of money, a man must avoid covetousness and selfishness (Luke 12:13-21 and Mat. 26:14, 15). He must be ready to work for it honestly

(Mat. 20: 1-16 and Luke 10: 7); he must use it, not hoard it (Mat. 6: 19-24).

5. In the use of money, a Christian will avoid anxiety (Mat. 6: 34), but will use it wisely to support himself and his dependents, for conduct of legitimate business and government (Luke 19: 13 and Mat. 22: 21), in education and preparation for life work, to supply the needs of others (Mat. 17: 24-27), and to enable him to do his most effective work.

6. Great dangers come from abuse of money and from wrong ideas of values (Luke 12: 15; Mat. 6: 19-21). A curse comes from acquiring money in wrong ways (Luke 19: 1-10) and from using it in hurtful, selfish ways (Luke 16: 19-31). The greatest curse comes from allowing a love of money to come between man and God (Mat. 19: 22, 23). There is something wrong with a man if money habitually "sticks to his fingers" (Luke 12: 13-21).

7. Blessing in the possession of money comes when it is used to bring blessing to others (Mat. 25: 14-30). All are debtors to God and are commanded to give to supply the needs of others (Acts 20: 35; Luke 6: 38; 16: 9 and Mat. 25: 40).

8. How much a man should give is governed by his ability and by comparative need. Love will prompt sacrifice and there are times when, in giving to God and His work, a man or woman should not selfishly count the cost (Mark 10: 21; 12: 41-44 and Mat. 23: 23).

Jesus Christ set the great example to all His followers when He became poor that we might become

rich (2 Cor. 8:9). He had no earthly possessions and yet all God's universe was at His disposal.

Summary

Money is of the earth and, like all material things, will pass away. It is dust that has become valuable as a standard medium of exchange for other things of greater value. It is a potential force that may be collected and set at work for evil or for good.

All property, like other things and other powers in the universe, belongs to God and is entrusted to a man only that he may be able to act as God's steward and may do the work effectively that God has given him to do. Money and other possessions and talents are not to be used for self-indulgence of the Christian steward or his family. It is to be used to prepare him and them for Christ's work; to equip them for the most effective service in Christ's Kingdom and to supply the physical, mental and spiritual needs of others. The great question is not "How much of *my* money shall I use for God in His service," but "how may I best use *God's* money, that He has entrusted to me, to do the work of Christ in the world?"

Some Passages for Special Study on Money

General. 1 Timothy 6:6-10.

Acquiring. Luke 12:15; 19:1-10; Mat. 16:26.

Misusing. Mat. 6:19-34; James 5:1-6; 1 John 2:15; Luke 18:18-30.

Spending. Mat. 25:14-30; Luke 16:9-13; 19:13-27; Luke 12:15-34; Luke 16:19-31.

Giving. Mat. 5:42; 6:1-4; 2 Cor. 9:6-15; Malachi 3:8-10; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; 2 Cor. 8:12; Luke 21:1-4; John 12:1-8.

Ownership and Mastery. First things first. Mat. 6:24-33; Mat. 13:22; Mat. 22:21; 1 Timothy 6:17; Psalm 62:11; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

XIV

SHALL WE PLAY?

IS MAN'S chief end to have plenty of money and to enjoy himself forever?

Every day in the year millions of dollars are spent in amusements—in automobile rides, in theaters and moving pictures, in feasting and dancing, in outings of various kinds, in toys and games, and in all kinds of sports. In America public amusement parks and theaters represent an investment much larger than the amount spent on churches and religion. One theater in New York took in \$50,000 in a week and another reports profits of \$1,633,577 a year. While in some lands there seem to be few amusements and little to relieve the monotony of hard work, in America and Europe the search for enjoyment and relaxation appears to be the chief aim in life. Children naturally live for play and many young people and adults admit that they work only so much as is necessary to secure the funds with which they may live and enjoy themselves.

There is certainly no sin in being happy. It is not right to be gloomy. To be cheerful and joyful, to guard one's health and if possible to find some time for relaxation and recreation is a Christian duty. God's children are told many times in the Bible to be happy or are repeatedly promised blessing ("happiness"). The term "blessed" (happy) is used 400

times. The term play is used some 20 times, mirth 50, laugh 40, cheer 20, delight 80, glad 100, pleasure 200, joy 400; these and similar terms occur over 1,200 times. Our Lord Jesus Christ repeatedly urged His disciples to be of "good cheer" (John 16:33), and many times spoke of joy and gladness as assets in the Christian life (John 15:11, etc.). Since it is a Christian's duty to be joyful, the important question is: On what should we depend for our joy and amusement? What can be counted upon to make a man or woman truly happy?

Some Definitions

Happy means "fortunate" or lucky, smiled on by circumstances. But a Christian may not look to a chance turn of the wheel of fortune for happiness; the Biblical meaning of happiness is "blessedness" that results from the approval and goodness of God.

Glad comes from the old Anglo-Saxon word meaning "bright," a characteristic that is truly Christian.

Pleasure is that which pleases or gives an agreeable sensation. It is neither right nor wrong in itself. Its desirability depends on what is put first in life and whether the thing that pleases us also pleases God.

Pastime—something to "pass the time"—may be innocent, useful or positively harmful; it is a colorless word.

Amusement is something that "amuses," or having to do with the muses—music, dancing, reading and other diversions. Amusements are valuable if not hindrances and not allowed to usurp the place of primary importance.

Diversion is something that “diverts” or turns one aside from more strenuous toil and activity.

Relaxation is similarly something that “loosens” the tension, lets down the strain of care and hard work—a very necessary element in the present-day life of those who carry heavy responsibility.

Recreation—one of the best words in its root meaning—signifies a “re-newal” or “re-creation” of worn-out forces of mind, body and spirit. Such re-creation may come through sleep, good food, fresh air, a change of occupation, or mental and spiritual stimulus from outside sources. To be of real value it implies that there has been useful activity that has worn the machinery and that requires and justifies replacement or rejuvenation.

The Place of Amusement in Life

In the past, and in some minds today, amusements or diversions have no place in the Christian's life. A solemn face and sedate manner have been thought to be the only becoming behavior for the Sabbath. All laws restricting Sunday activities have been called “Blue Laws.” Because Christ has been called a “Man of Sorrows” many have overlooked His unbroken joy and good cheer, and have thought that His followers must be characterized by unbroken seriousness, showing that they are oppressed by the sin of the world. One serious-minded Christian wrote acrimoniously objecting to the publication of a picture of my sainted father, taken when he was laughing at a joke, on the ground that “Dr. Pierson was a serious-minded servant

of God.” Some earnest Christians likewise objected to a young missionary joining in athletic games on ship-board because he was “mixing with the world.”

God must have had a good purpose when He made man capable of laughter and enjoyment. A child is most lovable and natural when he laughs and plays and a healthy child of God is most winning and normal when he is full of good cheer and finds pleasure in wholesome activities.

Among the benefits of healthy laughter, amusements and recreations are that they aid digestion, build up nerve health, induce normal sleep, help to keep mental balance, prepare for a renewal of useful activity and responsibility, bring cheer into the lives of others, and increase one’s influence for good on those with whom one comes into contact. Amusements of the right kind are a blessing when used with discrimination.

Kinds of Amusements

Some are hurtful to the participant because of their very nature—injurious food and drink; impure books, plays, pictures, conversation, exhibitions and dancing. Other amusements are innocent in themselves but are injurious in excess or because of their tendency to excess. When eating and drinking become gluttony, when novel reading and the “movie habit” interfere with our highest development and business, or when sports become an end in themselves rather than a means to an end, then they are hurtful.

Other amusements are harmful because of the associations that surround them, or because their influence

lowers standards and moral tone. This is the great objection to professional horse-racing, gambling, many theatrical performances, prize-fights, public dance halls, some feasts, and games played among evil companions.

Other amusements are wrong because they are cruel or endanger the life or morals of others. Such are bull-fights, dog-fights, cock-fights, exhibitions that are physically or morally injurious to men, women or children. Most so-called "beauty parades" and many theatrical performances are in this class as are also unkind jokes and some forms of hazing (see Romans 14: 16-21).

Still other amusements are objectionable only when out of place (like frivolity in a solemn religious service), or when they are ill-timed (like those that interfere with the proper use of the Lord's Day or the Lord's House).

Helpful amusements and recreation are so plentiful that there seems no excuse for choosing the unhealthy and injurious. Most recreations, taken in moderation, are good for the participant — sports, games, stimulating exercise, relaxation in wholesome reading, music, lectures and entertainments. There are also spiritual joys, and refreshment is found in good companionship. Such amusements and recreations also exercise a social benefit in drawing people together and by increasing friendliness and understanding. It is reported that Lindbergh's flight to France accomplished, in international relations, more good than the

efforts of many ambassadors. A cricket team of Papuans from Kwato, used in contests, is said to be an active missionary force.

How to Choose Our Recreations

Not every one is interested in the same type of amusement and all do not have the same opportunity. Taste and good judgment are needed. It is important therefore that children and youth have their taste educated and their self-control cultivated, so that they will choose the best and will not allow a diversion to interfere with things of prior importance. In choosing an amusement consider the following factors:

1. Is it in harmony with the law of God and the Spirit of Christ? Does it tend to obscure one's vision of God and one's sense of right?

2. Is it a true recreation—building up physical, mental and spiritual strength?

3. Is it using only a justifiable amount of time, strength or money—not an extravagance? (For example automobiles, big dinners, etc.)

4. Is it interfering with prior claims of greater importance in business or in service to God and man?

5. Is it helpful, not injurious or dangerous, to others who may participate or witness the sport or diversion? (Romans 14:19-21; 15:2.)

6. Is it in harmony with a high life purpose and does it help to attain a worth-while goal? It is important that a Christian keep the goal in sight. Steer, do not drift.

7. Is this amusement one in which I can participate to the glory of God?

A man's recreation—what he does when he is "off duty," with time, money and opportunity at his disposal—is a test of his true character.

It would be interesting to study the recreations of great men :

William E. Gladstone—reading and walking.

Woodrow Wilson and William H. Taft—golf.

Theodore Roosevelt—tennis, woodcraft, etc.

Others take up travel, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, natural history, archeology, etc.

Jesus Christ, in His manhood, had no amusements such as those by which men seek relaxation today. The chief sports and relaxations of His day were hunting, racing, gladiatorial exhibitions, theatrical performances, and festivals. He found His recreation in walking, comradeship, rest and prayer.

Bible Teachings on Pleasures and Amusements

1. Amusements mentioned in the Bible are: playing of boys and girls (Zechariah 8:5); dancing (Psalm 30:11; Luke 15:25; Matthew 11:17); music (1 Chronicles 23:5; Ezra 3:11); feasting (Ecclesiastes 2:24, etc.); races (1 Corinthians 9:24).

2. God promises to bless His children that they may be healthfully happy (Psalm 1; 16:11; Matthew 5:3-12; Ecclesiastes 8:15-9:1). Christ showed His desire to have His followers healthful and joyful (John 15:11; 16:22, 24; 17:13).

3. Evil, hurtful pleasures are to be avoided as sin-

ful and as bringing loss of power, as hindering fellowship with God, and as tending to spiritual disease and death (Proverbs 10:23; 21:17; 1 Timothy 5:6; 2 Timothy 3:4; Exodus 32:6; Luke 12:19).

4. All things are given us richly to enjoy—but with temperance or Godly self-control—and with due reference to the rights of others and the influence exerted on them.

5. The highest kind of joy or recreation is that which comes in service and in the exercise of God's natural gifts (Acts 8:8; Ecclesiastes 11:9; Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 100:2; Luke 2:10; 10:20; James 5:13).

If a child of God would be happy (blessed) he must (1) avoid the way of sin and (2) go in the way of cheerful compliance with God's will (Psalm 1). The Sermon on the Mount adds the directions that lead to happiness—repentance for sin, humility, teachableness, hunger for God's way, mercy, purity and peaceableness (Matthew 5). The Christian's reasons for good cheer are that Christ is with us (John 16:20) and has overcome (John 16:33).

The great questions for Christians to decide in connection with their amusements are those suggested by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; 10:23-11:1, and Romans 13:11-15:4. The question to ask is: Will our amusements build character, please God, increase usefulness and be helpful to others? If so, they are worth while.

XV

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

THE relation of the sexes is one of universal and undying interest. It is the theme of unnumbered novels and sociological studies and fills pages of periodicals, newspapers and reports. At least ninety per cent of the men and women of marriageable age have entered into marriage relations—and many have sought release. In some countries it is considered a disgrace not to be married. In the year 1926, over two million men and women were married in the United States and in the same year three hundred and sixty thousand were divorced.

Marriage has been variously called “an institution for the blind,” a lottery, a failure, a bondage, a pastime, a civil contract, and a sacrament instituted and ordained by God. Which idea is correct? Should a man be permitted to have more than one wife, as in India and China, or should a woman have more than one husband, as in Tibet? Should the man and woman be permitted to change husbands and wives at will, as in Russia—and increasingly in America through easy divorce? A well-known judge in America has written a book advocating “companionate marriages,” practically upholding the idea of short-term trial nuptial contracts.

The Christian view of marriage is that it is not merely a human institution, controlled by custom,

caprice and the laws of man, but that it is a divine institution to be governed by the laws of God for the highest welfare of humanity. According to this view, any disregard for God's laws in the relation of the sexes is sure to bring suffering and disaster. What, then, does God say on the subject?

The Divine Institution of Marriage

The Word of God declares that this institution, like the weekly day of rest, was ordained for all mankind from the beginning. These two institutions have not been, like national customs, the outcome of human experience. "So God created man . . . male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it . . . And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet [fitted] for him . . . Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 1:27, 28; 2:18, 24).

Man and woman are, therefore, counterparts of each other. Neither is complete without the other. The characteristics, abilities and functions of the two together make one whole, as two crystals cemented together form one perfect lense. In God's plan, marriage is not a custom to permit or to regulate indulgence of sex instincts nor is it intended chiefly to establish congenial companionship. Marriage, in God's plan, is (1) to perpetuate the race; (2) to give man and woman suitable supplementary counterparts and

(3) to form a new complete unit of society — the family.

It is clear, from this and later teachings of the Scriptures, that this institution of marriage is to be regulated by other laws and customs that will, so far as possible, insure the bearing of *healthy* children and the training of them for a godly life and service under favorable conditions. The husband and wife should be suitable companions—not carelessly chosen, uncongenial mates. The new unit of society should be a healthy unit—truly *one* and not easily separated.

Duties and Safeguards of Marriage

Is it a privilege to marry and establish a family—or is it a duty of a man and a woman to form a new unit of society under favorable conditions? “Marriage is honorable in all” (Hebrews 13:4). We are warned that “In the latter times some shall depart from the faith . . . forbidding to marry” (1 Timothy 4:1, 3). The Apostle Paul also says: “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully” (1 Timothy 5:14). Our Lord says, however, that it is not the duty of all to enter into marriage. “There are some eunuchs [those who do not marry], which were so born . . . there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it” (Matthew 19:12).

Marriage is the *normal* relationship of normal men and women. It is a privilege and, under certain circumstances, may be a duty. But it is not the duty of all to marry. Some are not fitted for marriage physically (from disease), or mentally or morally. These should be prevented, if possible, from bringing sorrow and disease to others by an ill-mated union and from injuring society by producing abnormal children. Still others may remain unmarried from choice because of other obligations—to men or to God and His Kingdom. Some missionaries are called to places or work under conditions that make marriage inadvisable. These are exceptional conditions.

The laws of physical and moral health, for the individual and for society, are also revealed by God's restrictions and by experience. The near of kin should not marry (Leviticus 18:6-18). Neither should those in the same family (Leviticus 20:11-21). Moreover, believers in God should not form alliances with unbelievers. If there is not sympathy and unity in the most essential spiritual things, how can there be a happy, healthful, united family? (Deuteronomy 7:3, 4; Ezra 10:2, 11; 2 Corinthians 6:14.)

The Permanance of Marriage

In God's purpose, marriage is a permanent bond, formed by a life covenant between a man and a woman who are free to enter into that covenant. Jesus Christ Himself repeated the original basis of marriage and added, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).

Hasty, thoughtless marriages endanger the happiness of both husband and wife, give no promise of a true home where children will be well trained, and threaten society through unfaithfulness and divorce. Divorce is not a part of God's program. Marriage is for life, and only death of one party can dissolve the bond (Romans 7:2). The divinely appointed law-giver, Moses, was permitted to provide a way of escape from the marriage bond for those who found it unbearable or where one party had faithlessly broken the contract. In such cases a bill of divorce set free the injured party, but according to Christ's standards remarriage is not permitted during the life of either.

"Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so . . . Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (Matthew 19:8, 9).

While polygamy was not punished under primitive conditions, there is no indication that it was ever approved by God. "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away" (Deuteronomy 17:17). Christian men are enjoined in the New Testament to have only one wife (1 Timothy 3:2, 12) and Christian women are to have only one husband (1 Timothy 5:9).

A Single Standard of Purity

While even good men, under primitive conditions at times took more than one wife, the evils of polygamy were manifest. The first one recorded as marry-

ing two women was a son of Cain (Genesis 4:19) who apparently was also a murderer (Genesis 4:23, 24). The evil results of polygamy were shown even in the cases of Abraham and of Jacob. They are emphasized in the cases of David and Solomon (Nehemiah 13:26, 27).

Not only is promiscuous impurity sternly condemned (1 Corinthians 6:12-20; Jude 7 and Revelation 21:8), but even impurity of thought and unfaithfulness in desire is rebuked both in men and in women. Jesus Christ said:

“Whosoever looketh . . . to lust . . . hath committed adultery . . . in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). It is the “pure in heart” who see God and nothing obscures the vision of God and of right more than impurity of thought and life. There is a very definite connection between the increase of godlessness and the increase of general sex immorality and divorce during the past twenty-five years — especially in our cities and among the rich. A great safeguard for morality, among both men and women, is monogamous marriage (1 Corinthians 7:2). “To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” The apostle goes on to show that this is a general rule but that for some the unmarried state may be better (1 Corinthians 7:8).

Christian Marriage Ideals

God’s ideal of marriage is that which will not only produce a healthful unit of society, a happy home, but one that will produce and train healthy, Godly children.

"Did not he make one? . . . And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth" (Malachi 2:15).

The highest Christian ideal of marriage is presented in the figure of Christ and the Church. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church . . . Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. . . . Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Ephesians 5:22-33).

The marriage that meets God's ideal for happiness and success is thus one in which there is true union in unselfish, sacrificial love, in purity, in harmony, in mutual respect, as there is union between the head and the body, and love between Christ and His Church. Separation in body or spirit means destruction of the unit. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." The way to avoid disaster and to insure a blessed life-partnership is to make sure that the marriage is "in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39).

Helpful Literature

"Quiet Talks on Home Ideals," by S. D. Gordon.

"Ethics of Marriage," by H. S. Pomeroy.

"I Pronounce Them" (a novel), by Studdart Kennedy.

XVI

EFFECTIVE PRAYER

DOES prayer change things? If so, what things, and how?

Prayer to some superhuman power is almost universal—in one form or another. Think of the number of prayers offered daily all over the world—by young and old, by rich and poor, by learned and ignorant; in Christian homes; prayers in hospitals and by beds of sickness; prayers in churches and schools; in prayer meetings and missions; prayers in private and in public; prayers long and short; prayers impassioned and formal. Are all these prayers answered, or only a few of them? If some are answered and some passed by, what is God's method of selection?

But Christians are not the only ones who pray. People of all religions pray—many of them most earnestly. In Africa, men pray to fetishes, to sticks or stones. Millions in India pray to idols of wood or clay or metal. Moslems pray five times a day, kneeling and facing toward Mecca. Buddhists, who think that they cannot pray as continuously as they ought, attach written prayers to flags or cylinders or water wheels and believe that every flutter of the flag, every turn of the wheel voices the prayer for them. In Greek Catholic countries, prayers are offered before ikons and in Roman Catholic countries

before images, pictures and crucifixes. Jews pray in the synagogues and at home wearing the phylacteries. To the true God and to false gods prayer is being offered in a continuous flow. Surely He must be an omniscient God who could hear all and decide which to answer among the many and often conflicting petitions. He must also be omnipotent Who could answer even a fractional part of them all!

Is prayer worth while? If so, does it make a difference what kind of prayer? We are often asked to pray definitely for the sick, and for those in sorrow; for friends in financial difficulties and facing perplexing problems; for the transformation of unbelievers and backsliders. At the same time many pray for rain and for sunshine, for victory in political campaigns and for the defeat of an enemy.

Evidently, conflicting petitions cannot all be answered in the affirmative. Some become discouraged and give up prayer, but there must be some reason why so many men, women and children all over the world continue praying.

What Is Prayer?

Is prayer based on fear and superstition, as in the case of African fetish worshippers? Is it merely a habit based on traditions and custom? Is it a gamble, taking a chance? Does prayer exert merely a subjective influence—with mental and moral benefit to the one who prays—but without promise of an objective answer? Or have we good reason to believe that, under certain conditions, prayer is heard and an-

swered directly by an almighty, and all-wise Father in heaven?

These are serious, important questions. Either prayer is a waste of time and a relic of superstition or it is a mighty source of power that is merely being played with by those who do not understand the conditions on which answers depend.

In the most obvious and simple sense of the word, *prayer is the offering of a petition*. In the Christian sense, it is the making of a request to God (1 Kings 3:5; Mat. 6:6). Many so-called prayers are not prayers at all—as when a preacher makes his prayer a sermon. Some “pray horizontally” to men, rather than “perpendicularly” to God. Such was the prayer which a newspaper reporter declared to be “the finest prayer ever delivered to a Boston audience.”

Worship and praise, confession and Scripture quotations are not prayer—technically speaking—but in the Christian sense prayer has come to mean communion with God so that it rightly includes all of these elements (John 4:24). Our Lord’s prayer, recorded in John 17, contains very few direct petitions but much communion with the Father.

Why Pray?

Thinking men and women rightly may ask why they should give time and energy to prayer—so much of which seems ineffective. Here are some of the reasons:

1. *God is almighty*, all-wise, and loving; therefore, He is able and willing to answer prayers of His peo-

ple. This is a fundamental conviction if we are to believe that prayer is worth while (Mat. 7:11; Ephesians 3:20).

2. *God has told us to pray.* He has urged prayer as a duty and a privilege, and has definitely promised to answer prayer (Isaiah 65:24; Mat. 7:7, 8; Luke 18:1; Phil. 4:6).

3. *Men need help* from outside themselves. Human resources are insufficient. We are weak and ignorant; we are tempted and foolish; we have tasks and problems beyond our powers. Christ said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Things impossible with men are possible with God (Luke 18:27).

4. *Godly men pray* and all through the ages have declared that their prayers were answered—Abraham, Moses, Elijah, David, Daniel, Paul (Genesis 15:2 and 21:1, 2; Exodus 15:25; 1 Samuel 23:10-12; 1 Kings 18:36-38; Daniel 9:20-23).

5. *Jesus Christ prayed* and told His disciples to pray (Mark 11:24; 14:23). He spent whole nights in prayer (Luke 6:12) and offered ejaculatory prayers in public (John 12:27), in the Garden (Mat. 26:36 to 39) and on the Cross (Luke 23:34). He gave His disciples a model form of prayer (Mat. 6:9 to 13) and offered a still more wonderful prayer just before His crucifixion (John 17:1 to 26).

6. *Innumerable testimonies* come from intelligent, trustworthy, godly men and women that God has answered their prayers in unmistakable ways—George Müller and Charles Spurgeon of England, Hudson Taylor of China, Jacob Chamberlin of India, David

Livingstone of Africa, John G. Paton of the New Hebrides, D. L. Moody, A. J. Gordon and Arthur T. Pierson of America—and countless others, past and present.

7. The most convincing proof for most of us is found in personal experience. God has answered *my* prayers in unmistakable ways; therefore, I know that *He does answer prayer*.

The Secret of Effectual Prayer

It is clear from the words of Christ and from Christian experience that all prayers are not answered and that many are answered in the negative. Our Lord and His apostles give certain conditions that must be observed.

The times and place of prayer are not essential. Some Old Testament saints prayed three times daily (Psalms 55:16, 17 and Daniel 6:10). The Jews prayed in the Temple and in synagogues; Christians pray in their homes, in churches or wherever they may be in any time of need. Christ prayed in public and in private (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12). He advised His disciples to pray to God in private (Mat. 6:5 to 8) rather than ostentatiously in public. Some prayed kneeling in humility (Acts 21:5; Eph. 3:14) or standing in reverence (Neh. 9:2; Mark 11:25), or bowing on their faces (Gen. 24:26; Mat. 26:39).

These are matters of secondary importance, except as they reveal the petitioner's expectation and attitude toward God. Other things, however, are of prime importance if our prayers are to be effective:

1. *Sincerity and Intelligence.* There must be a real, heartfelt desire—not a formal, perfunctory request. “Vain repetitions” merit no attention from God (Deut. 4:29; Ephesians 6:18; Romans 1:9; 8:26; 1 Corinthians 14:15).

2. *Unselfishness.* This does not mean that the answer will not benefit the petitioner, but it must be a prayer that considers the welfare of others. Many prayers are unanswered because we ask amiss (James 4:2, 3). Shall we pray for rain when our neighbors need sunshine; or for success in war when right may be on the other side? Our Lord’s “model prayer” (Mat. 6:9-13) teaches us to say “our — us — we” rather than “my — me — I” (Joel 2:17; 1 Timothy 2:1; 1 John 5:16).

3. *Faith.* If prayer with us is a “gamble,” we have no right to expect an answer, though God is compassionate and may grant the request. “He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6; Mark 11:24; James 1:5-7).

Why should anyone petition Congress if there is no faith that such a body exists, or that it can or will grant the petition?

We may wisely plead the promises of God in prayer and have confidence in His power, His wisdom, His love and His readiness to answer petitions rightly presented.

4. *Humility.* Too many prayers are practically attempts to dictate to God. As petitioners we must realize our personal limitations—our ignorance as to what

is best, our need for help and our unworthiness (Luke 7:6, 7; 18:13, 14). A petition to the British Parliament was rejected because the signers neglected to use the word "humbly" in the petition. Our God is not arrogant, but He is too great for us to approach in a proud spirit with demands.

5. *Sympathy and Unity.* Successful prayer must be in tune with God's good purposes and God's program. The success of God's enterprises, the advancement of His Kingdom must take precedence over our personal desires and plans. Do we truly seek first His Kingdom, and His righteousness in our petitions for health, for happiness, for business success? Are we willing to suffer and to have our loved ones suffer if only His good plans may be carried out in China—or in New York? (1 John 5:14, 15; Mat. 18:19, 20.)

6. *Under Orders.* Are we living in obedience to God? Are we in our praying wholly under the control of Christ? Are our prayers such as He will endorse? This is the meaning of "ask in my name." It is like an O. K. on a bill, or an endorsement on a check. Assurance of answer can come only when Jesus Christ can also sign the petition (John 14:13; 15:16; 16:23 to 26).

7. *Coöperation.* Prayer is not a lazy man's method of securing results. We have no right to ask God to grant us things that we should work to obtain. Why ask for food when we should work for it with the sweat of our brow or our brain? Why pray for health when we neglect God's laws of health or refuse a God-given remedy that is at hand? Why expect God to

work a miracle in a friend's conversion when we set an evil example or refuse to speak a word? No! God has a right to demand that we do our utmost to co-operate with Him in bringing to pass the things for which we pray. We are not only to ask but we are to seek and knock (Mat. 7:7).

Does "prayer change things"? Perhaps not, but *God* changes things in answer to prayer. Our faith is in God rather than in the petition alone. It will be worth while to study the progress recorded in the Bible, the promises of God in reference to prayer and the answers recorded.

How God answers prayer it is not necessary for us to know. It is enough that He is able. He is willing, He has promised to answer prayer that meets the reasonable requirements. He may answer by the direct exertion of His almighty power; He may answer by using natural laws of cause and effect; He may answer by spiritual influences that He brings to bear on the petitioner and on others concerned, but *He does answer prayer*. He has promised and He will perform. He has done so definitely, unmistakably, times without number.

Some books to read:

"Life of George Müller," by Arthur T. Pierson.

"Life of Hudson Taylor," by Mrs. Howard Taylor.

"Prayer Changes Things," by S. D. Gordon.

"The Kneeling Christian," by "An Unknown Christian."

"Answered Prayer in China," by Charles E. Scott.

"Praying Hyde," by F. A. McGraw.

"How I Know God Answers Prayer," by Mrs. Jonathan Goforth.

"Men Who Prayed," by Henry W. Frost.

"With Christ in the School of Prayer," by Andrew Murray.

A BIBLE STUDY OF PRAYER

I. Reasons for Prayer

1. God's invitation and command—Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:3; 1 Timothy 2:1.

2. Promise of answer—Exodus 22:27; Deuteronomy 4:29; Psalm 50:15; 145:18, 19; Isaiah 65:24; Matthew 7:7; 21:22; John 16:24; Ephesians 3:20.

3. Example of men of God—Abraham, Genesis 15; Moses, Exodus 14:15, 16; Numbers 21:7; David, Psalms 3, 43; 1 Samuel 23:10, 12; Solomon, 1 Kings 3:1-13; Elijah, 1 Kings 18:41-45; James 5:17; Elisha, 2 Kings 4:33; 6:18, 20; Isaiah, 2 Chronicles 32:20; Jeremiah, 32:16-21; Daniel, 2:17, 18; 9:3, 4, 20, 21; Paul and Silas, Acts 16:25.

4. Example of Christ—Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:23; Luke 6:12; 22:41-45; John 17, etc.

5. Answered prayers—Abraham, Genesis 15; Jacob, Genesis 32; Moses, Exodus 14:15, 22; Gideon, Judges 6:36-40; David, 1 Samuel 23:10-12; Daniel, 9:20, 23; Cornelius, Acts 10:3-6; Peter, Acts 9:40; the church, Acts 12:5-12; Paul, Acts 28:8.

II. Reasons for Unanswered Prayer

1. Iniquity in the heart—Psalm 34:15; 66:18.
2. Disobedience—Proverbs 28:9.
3. Asking amiss—James 4:2, 3.
4. Lack of faith—James 1:6.

III. When and Where to Pray

1. Morning, noon and night—Psalm 55:16, 17; Daniel 6:10.
2. At all times—Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12.
3. Christ's custom—Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12.
4. In the Temple—Mark 11:17.
5. Upper room—Acts 1:13; closet, Matthew 6:6.
6. Out of doors—Luke 23:39-42; Acts 10:9; 16:13.
7. Everywhere—1 Timothy 2:8.

IV. Postures in Prayer

1. Standing—1 Samuel 1:26; 1 Kings 8:22; Luke 18:11, 13.
2. Spreading hands—Ezra 9:5; 1 Timothy 2:8.
3. Kneeling—1 Kings 8:54; Psalm 95:6; Luke 22:41; Acts 9:40; 20:36; Ephesians 3:14; Philippians 2:10.
4. Bowing on face—Genesis 24:26; Exodus 4:31; Joshua 5:14; 7:6; Matthew 26:39; Revelation 11:16.

V. Accompaniments to Prayer

1. Thanksgiving—Philippians 4:6.
2. Adoration, worship—Matthew 6:9.

3. Confession—Psalm 51; Daniel 9:5; 1 John 1:9.
4. Watching—Mark 13:33; 14:38; Colossians 4:2.
5. Fasting—Matthew 17:21.

VI. Characteristics of True Prayer

1. Faith in God—Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24; Hebrews 10:22; 1 John 5:13-15.
2. Obedience—James 5:16; 1 John 3:22; Psalm 37:4, 5.
3. Sincerity and earnestness—Psalm 145: 18, 19; Luke 18:1; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 10:22; James 5:13.
4. Forgiving spirit—Mark 11:25.
5. Humility—2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 10:17; Luke 18:13, 14.
6. United agreement—Matthew 18:19, 20; 2 Corinthians 1:11; 1 John 3:22.
7. In the Spirit, in the name of Christ, according to the will of God—John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 17; 1 John 5:13-15; Romans 8:26; Ephesians 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20.

VII. For Whom and for What to Pray

1. For those in authority—1 Timothy 2:2.
2. Enemies—Luke 6:28.
3. Saints—Ephesians 6:18.
4. Laborers for God—Matthew 9:38; Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 1:11.
5. All men—1 Timothy 2:1.

6. For mercy and forgiveness—Luke 18: 13, 14, 17; Acts 8: 22; 1 John 5: 16.

7. Healing and deliverance—James 5: 15, 16; 3 John 2; Romans 1: 10.

8. Wisdom and the Holy Spirit—Luke 11: 13; Ephesians 1: 16-23; James 1: 5.

9. Souls—James 5: 16; 1 John 5: 16.

10. Courage—Acts 4: 23-31.

11. God's will—Matthew 26: 36-46.

12. Kingdom of God—Matthew 6: 10; Colossians 4: 2, 3; 2 Thessalonians 3: 1.

VIII. Great Prayers in the Bible

Abraham—Genesis 18: 23-32.

Moses—Exodus 32: 11-14, 31-35; 33: 12-23.

David—1 Chronicles 29: 10-19; Psalms 4, 17, 51, 85 and 122.

Solomon—2 Chronicles 6: 12-42.

Nehemiah 1: 4-11.

Daniel—9: 1-23.

Model prayer for disciples—Matthew 6: 9-15.

Christ's prayer in the Garden—John 17.

Apostles' prayer in persecution—Acts 4: 23-31.

Apostle Paul—Ephesians 1: 12-23; 3: 14-21; Philippians 1: 3-11; Colossians 1: 3-18.

XVII

DEATH AND ITS SEQUEL

IT IS estimated that sixty million people die each year, or more than nine thousand each hour of the day. Most people, in normal mental and physical health, have a strong antipathy to death. They dread the experience. Even those who do not fear to die wish to postpone death for themselves and their loved ones.

And yet, many others seek death. There were 4,796 suicides in America last year, an increasing number of them under twenty-five years of age. Many others do not hesitate to run the risk of death for fame or adventure, as in transatlantic flights; in the cause of science, as in the case of chemists and physicians; in the path of duty, as with soldiers and policemen; and for loved ones or for humanity, as with mothers and life-saving heroes; or for love of God, as in the case of many missionaries and martyrs.

The less men think of God, the more careless they are about life and the more ready they are to take the lives of others. Note the number of murders and lynchings each year. Many men will kill others for the paltry sum of one hundred dollars or less. In Russia and Mexico, life is cheap and men are put to death for petty offences. Others think it is a sin to kill any one, even a murderer, or to destroy any life,

Hindus refusing even to kill vermin for fear lest they destroy some ancestor whose spirit has been re-incarnated in that form.

Views of Death

But in the view of most men, while death is looked upon as a universal experience and inevitable (Hebrews 9:27), it is considered an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26) that puts an end to pleasures and cherished plans, that deprives us of the companionship of our loved ones, and that takes away honored, useful servants of mankind. Death, therefore, causes mourning and, in many lands, is marked by the wearing of black and by other signs of grief.

Generally two things are conceded in regard to death: the certainty of the event, and the uncertainty of the time. No one can be assured that he will live to see the sun set on any day, or that he will return from a journey. *It is, therefore, important in life to prepare for death.* We cannot ignore the effect of death on those left behind or on our own future destiny. While some have been raised from the dead by superhuman power, no one has ever come back to tell us what lies beyond the gates. The only One who has spoken authoritatively in regard to death and its relation to human destiny is God Himself, through His prophets and through Jesus Christ, His Son.

Thus men view death differently—as an enemy that takes away opportunity for enjoyment; as a friend that ends suffering; as the end of all things for the individual; as a sleep from which there will be an

awakening; as a transmigration from one form of existence to another (as with Hindus and ancient Egyptians); as absorption into deity (as with Buddhists); as an exodus from earth into an experience either of misery or of infinite joy in a life beyond the grave.

What can we know of the significance of death; its sequence; or our responsibility for what it will mean to us and to others? From experience we learn only to fear and dislike death and to realize that we cannot return through the gates. Spiritualists and others claim to communicate with the dead, but are so mixed up with fraud and foolishness and deeds of darkness that they create no confidence in their claims. Many dream dreams and declare visions, but they offer no satisfying proofs. One only speaks with authority, Jesus Christ, who claimed and evidenced divine and superhuman knowledge, who overcame death by raising the dead and who Himself came back to life and taught men for forty days after He had died on the Cross. He spoke of death with authority and with no uncertain teaching.

What Is Death?

Very few intelligent men and women believe that death brings extinction. The belief in the continuance of life is almost universal, and has been in all ages.

The dictionary defines death as a cessation of the functions of life. Science defines death as "inability to respond to environment." When a body cannot as-

simulate food or take in and expel air, or experience sensations, we call that death.

In man's terminology, as related to human experience, death is the separation of the soul from the body. Minerals do not die in the ordinary sense, but plants die, beasts die, human beings die—in different ways and in varying degrees.

In vegetable and animal life, a body may be dead only in part or to certain things. A branch or an arm may be dead, and yet the main body be alive. So a man may be dead to music through deafness or failure to respond to "the concord of sweet sounds." That does not prove that there is no music. Another man may lack the sense of taste or may be paralyzed in some limb or muscles. So a man may be "dead to the world," in that it awakens in him no response; he may be dead to love, dead to spiritual realities, or dead to God. His failure to sense, to appreciate and to respond does not disprove these realities, but evidences only the man's deadness.

Some Causes of Death

In Ecclesiastes 12: 1-7, we have a remarkable poetic description of some of the main causes of physical death—the broken skull; the severed spinal cord; the failure of the heart to function; serious injury to the lungs. In general, death is due to a lack of activity in the organs or to violent disturbance of bodily functions, from weakness or disease or from an act of man or an accident.

Physical death comes from broken laws of health

or from the wearing out of the human organism; mental decay and death come from disease or from the wearing out or abuse of mental powers, and spiritual death from the disregard of spiritual laws and powers. Or death may result from the fact that the body is out of accord with its environment, as when a fish is taken from the water, or a land animal is submerged. So spiritual death may come from failure to feed the spiritual life or because a human soul is immersed in environment purely physical, worldly or devilish.

How Explain Death?

Some scientists tell us that death is not a necessary human experience. Trees may live to be a thousand years old. Elephants may live to be a hundred. If the laws of health were perfectly obeyed, if all organs could function exactly and the environment and employments were perfectly adapted to human needs, man might still live to the age of Methusaleh. There seems to be no scientific necessity for man's death.

We can understand why God has provided for the death of the aged and infirm, the weak and diseased, the insane and the criminal. But in God's economy and in harmony with His loving program, how can we account for the death of innocent little children, depriving them of opportunity and bringing such sorrow to parents; or for the death of youth at the threshold of a promising future; or of a mature man in his prime; a mother of young children; a wise teacher, when he has just reached the height of knowledge? How can we understand great catas-

trophes that wipe out whole communities of men, women and children, as in times of plague in India, famine in China, earthquake in Japan or California, fires in London, or floods in the Mississippi Valley?

Moslems explain these events by *kismet*—fate—the inscrutable will of Allah. Others explain them by luck, by the theory of punishment for evil deeds (Luke 13:2, 4) or by the necessity to keep men conscious of the uncertainty of human life and the need for being prepared for eternity. Doubtless, many deaths are due to broken laws; they are a penalty for evil deeds, or serve as a warning to others. Death may also come as a messenger of mercy, saving from a worse fate. Without death, criminals and careless prodigals would become more bold and threatening; without the death of older leaders, the rising generation would have little chance for advancement; without death, much of sympathy and the ministry of love would have no opportunity for expression. Without death there would be no present assurance of the entrance into life beyond the grave.

Death, Physical and Spiritual

Death is of two kinds, physical and spiritual. In both cases, it is an experience of a "lack of correspondence to environment." It is a failure to function. As physical death is due to a separation of the soul from the body, so spiritual death is the separation of the soul of man from God. How then can a man escape this experience of separation? Physical death is natural and none can expect to escape it,

unless they are alive at the Second Coming of Christ. But physical death is only a transition, a change of sphere. The "sting" has been taken away. We need not fear physical death more than we fear to leave home for a foreign land and to meet its new experiences. To depart, says the apostle Paul, is to be with Christ, which is far better (Phil. 1:23); and to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). In the New Testament death is not an experience for believers in Christ. They "fall asleep" (John 11:11; Acts 7:60); they are asleep in Jesus (1 Thes. 4:14; 1 Cor. 15:18); they depart (2 Tim. 4:6) and if they die in the Lord, they merely rest from their labors (Rev. 14:13).

The only death to be feared is spiritual death—the separation of the soul from God and the lack of correspondence to His environment. This is so awful an experience that it is described as "hell," a place of torment. It is described as an experience as agonizing as the sensation of flames on a physical body. But this experience may be avoided. God wishes no one to pass through it. Christ came to show the way of escape.

1. The way to avoid physical death is through abundance of life. The way to avoid spiritual death is by the abundant life of God. But it is a physical fact that "only life can beget life." Therefore, Jesus said, "Ye must be born again . . . from above."

2. As death, physical and spiritual, came through disobedience (Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:17-19), so physical life comes through obedience to God's physical laws,

and spiritual life comes through obedience to God's spiritual laws (John 1:12). To avoid spiritual death—the separation of the soul from God—we must be able to respond to spiritual things, to spiritual visions and voices, to spiritual motives and desires, to spiritual truth and ideals of God as revealed in Christ, to spiritual powers and spiritual service. "Death is thus swallowed up in victory."

Bible Teaching on Death

- I. *Physical Death*—Job 21:23-26; James 1:10; Numbers 23:10.
 1. Universality—2 Samuel 14:14; 1 Cor. 15:51; Heb. 9:27.
 2. Uncertainty as to time—James 4:14.
 3. Nature—Eccl. 12:7; 2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Tim. 6:7.
 4. Cause—Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Romans 8:10.
 5. Results—Psalm 23:4; John 9:4; 1 Thes. 4:13.
 6. Remedy—John 1:12; 21:19; 1 Cor. 15:21.
 7. Final End—1 Cor. 15:21-26; Rev. 20:14.
- II. *Spiritual Death*—Mat. 10:28; Romans 8:6; 1 Tim. 5:6.
 1. Causes—John 8:24; Romans 6:23.
 2. Responsibility—Romans 14:7.
 3. Results—Mat. 25:41; Mark 8:36.

4. Remedy—Mat. 10:28; John 8:51; Eph. 2:1, 5.
5. Second Death—John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:14, 15.

III. *Spiritual Life in Physical Death*—1 Cor. 15:51.

1. Life in Christ—Galatians 2:20; Philip-pians 1:20-23; Col. 3:3.
2. At Home—Ecclesiastes 12:7; 2 Cor. 5:8; 1 Thes. 5:10.
3. Death in the Lord—Rom. 6:8; 14:8; Rev. 14:13.
4. Quickened—Isaiah 55:3; 1 Cor. 15:42-44; Ephesians 2:1, 5.
5. Death Abolished—2 Tim. 1:10.

XVIII

LIFE AND ITS MEANING

YOUR view of life will determine your view of death and what follows; it will largely determine your use of life, your conduct, your sense of responsibility, your ambition, and your work.

Think of what life means to the worm or to the butterfly; what it means to the African savage, to the Hindu philosopher, to the Russian atheist, to the saintly mother, to Jesus Christ Himself!

The Life That Now Is

The dictionaries define life as "ability to exercise natural functions"; as "the period of existence between birth and death"; as the "state of conscious existence" — including possibly the state following physical death. Science defines life as "ability to respond to environment"; or as "self-contained power to function."

In the Bible, life, in all its phases, is the greatest of all themes. Life is mentioned specifically over one thousand times and death, its antithesis, about eight hundred times.*

We share physical life with all the animal creation and to a lesser extent with the vegetable world. Is

* Four different root words are translated "life" in the Old Testament and twelve different words in the New Testament. They refer to existence, length of days, activity, biological life, manner of life, and mental or spiritual life.

that the highest idea of life you have for yourself and your fellow-men?

In some cases existence, called "life," is worse than that of a dog or a wild beast. The physical organs perform their functions, but that is all. Such is the life of idiots. A step higher in the scale of human existence is where both physical and mental powers are active but where no higher spiritual power controls. Such is the life of criminals, of intellectual and social parasites and atheists. To such men life means only existence, with ability to act and to think, and to show only such intelligence, affection, courage, or self-sacrifice as is found in the brute creation. The powers of body and brain may be highly developed but these powers bring them into contact only with the physical and earthly world.

This idea of life makes death an end of enjoyment or a release from pain; it makes honesty a matter of policy; makes personal purity a matter of expediency or preference; makes murder and suicide a matter of little moment except as they affect personal comfort or the comfort of the community; it makes religion a matter of superstition and the Bible merely a collection of folk-lore, superstition and human philosophy.

Such is the view of life expressed in Ecclesiastes—"all the days of the life of thy vanity" (6:12 and 9:9); or as in Isaiah (38:12)—an existence "cut off like a weaver"; or as in the letter of James (4:14) "a vapour, that appeareth for a little time."

Eternal Life

But such is not God's ideal for man. It is not the idea expressed in the beginning as the difference between man—made in the likeness of God—and beasts that swarmed over the earth. Some conception of God's ideal is expressed in the words, "God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7).

God's ideal for man is more perfectly revealed in Christ and the Gospels. Jesus spoke of the "way, which leadeth unto life" (Matthew 7:14); of entering into life (Matthew 19:17); of receiving eternal life (Mark 10:30). In the Gospel of John we read that "In him [Christ] was life" (John 1:4); that whosoever believes in Him shall have eternal life (John 3:16); and that those who receive not the Son "shall not see life" (John 3:36). Jesus Himself says that He came that men "might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Certainly He does not mean earthly, physical life; He must mean the life of God in us, the life that no man, no disease, no accident, can take away.

How can we recognize this life?

The scientist tests most things by the senses, but we cannot "see" life apart from the body; we cannot test it by its appearance, taste, odor, sound, or feeling.

The philosopher tests truth by the processes of reason; but many intelligent, educated men and women cannot agree on the reasonableness of eternal, spiritual life, apart from physical and mental activity.

The practical historian tests theories by experience. But eternal life is so intangible that man's experience is not accepted as conclusive.

We can, however, test life by its effects. We do not see or hear or taste or smell air or electricity, gravitation or magnetism or molecular attraction. We believe in and know them by the effects they produce. Air fills the lungs and in motion stirs the trees or propels the ships. Electricity lights the house, warms the stove or energizes the motor. Gravitation, magnetism and molecular attraction are revealed to understanding minds in physical phenomena.

As the reality of physical and mental life is revealed in their effects on men, so spiritual life, to those who have spiritual eyes to see and spiritual minds to understand, is revealed in its effects. The man in whom the Spirit of God dwells is actuated by a new motive, a divine love; he has a new understanding of spiritual things; he has new power, not accounted for by physical and mental forces.

Scientists accept a hypothesis that stands the test of repeated experiments. When repeatedly predictions as to the effects that will follow the application of certain laws are fulfilled, the theory is adopted. So, in the realm of the Spirit, when the promises of God as to the results that will follow the faithful observance of His spiritual laws and principles are continually fulfilled, we are justified in accepting the truth. We are told that "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). Men dead to the things of God are

brought to newness of life; women formerly repelled by heavenly things are so changed that they are attracted by them; men too weak to accomplish any spiritual task become energized by a new power. New insight, new tastes, new sensitiveness to spiritual voices, new strength to do what was before impossible, these are evidences of the reality of a life of God which He has promised to those who receive and obey Jesus Christ. He came to give this life.

What other satisfactory explanation is there for the transformation of such men as S. H. Hadley, the "Bowery Bum"; or of Africaner, "the Hottentot Terror"; or for the reformation of whole communities—as in Ongole, India; or in the cannibals of Kwato, New Guinea? What other sufficient explanation is there for the Student Volunteer Movement and for the persistence and growing power of the Bible in spite of all attacks against it? For nearly two thousand years the signs that were promised to "those who believe" and who receive eternal life, have been fulfilled times without number.

The final reason for accepting with confidence the reality of this "eternal life" is the testimony of Jesus Christ. His life and character, His power and works prove His superior and perfect knowledge—and He spoke of this life with no uncertain sound.

The Life to Come

But is there a future life beyond the grave? The materialist and atheist say, "No—there is only annihilation." The agnostic says, "We do not know and

cannot know." The Christian and many others say, "Yes, there is and we can know what it contains for us."

There is among men an almost universal belief in a life beyond the grave. Christians call the experience "Heaven" and "Hell." American Indians called it "The Happy Hunting Ground"; Moslems call it "Paradise." Ancient Egyptians and Greeks, and modern Hindus, Chinese and even primitive savages of the South Seas believe in a life after death.

What basis have we for belief in such a continued existence?

1. *Science* reveals a normal hunger in men for a continuance of life. The innumerable facts that are evidence of the reality of God, and the radical difference between men and beasts, point at least to the possibility of spiritual life as distinct from physical. But science is not conclusive.

2. *History*, which is the testimony of experience, points to almost universal belief in immortality and records thousands of incidents, like that of D. L. Moody, where men and women have, on their deathbeds, claimed that they could look into the life beyond. Jesus Christ is a historical character. Millions of intelligent people believe that He came back from death and told of the certainty of life beyond. We also see many cases where the spirit of men brightens and becomes more keen as the physical body decays.

3. *Philosophy* argues for the need of a future life to equalize the injustices of earthly experience and to correct iniquities. Reason also points out the immense

realms in the universe that are still to be explored, and the many lives that have been suddenly brought to an end here with their rich possibilities still undeveloped.

4. But while these arguments point to the reasonableness of a life beyond the grave, there is only one conclusive evidence of such a life and that is the testimony of one who knows and whose word can be accepted. That evidence we believe we have in the *testimony of Jesus Christ*, corroborated by other sacred, inspired writers.

Testimony of the Bible

(1) In the Old Testament, the writers evidently believed in immortality but their ideas and the basis for their belief were obscure. The patriarchs "slept with" their "fathers"; David said of his infant son: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Samuel 12:23). There are the cases of Enoch, who "walked with God"; of Elijah who went up to heaven in a chariot of fire; and of Samuel who was called up from the grave to speak to Saul. Future rewards are promised to the godly that were not fulfilled on earth.

(2) Jesus Christ, the Son of God Himself, who said that He came from God and returned to God, is the first who spoke with authority on the subject of Eternal Life (2 Timothy 1:10). He repeatedly referred to the continued life of the soul (Matthew 10:28); He spoke of the eternal life that comes with the knowledge of the true God and of His Son (John

17:3). He told of the resurrection life when they cannot "die any more" (Luke 20:36; John 11:23). He gave the parables of the Rich Man and Lazarus and of the "Sheep and the Goats." He spoke of "reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12). He raised men from the dead and promised His disciples that some should not see death; He promised eternal life (John 10:28); and He said to the penitent thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Most convincing of all, He Himself rose from the dead to prove His power over death and ascended alive into the heavens to prove immortality.

(3) The apostles who saw Him after His resurrection believed in and testify confidently to the same immortality. The Acts, Epistles and Revelation are full of this teaching and on it the Church is built. "The gift of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23); "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20); "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (1 John 2:25; 5:11).

As to the experiences of the future life, little is revealed. It is left in the hands of a loving and just and omnipotent God. But we are clearly told at least two things:

(1) For those who believe God and accept Jesus Christ, His Son, as their Lord and Saviour there will be an experience of conscious joy and service. Their sphere of life is called Heaven or Paradise (1 Corinthians 2:9). They are united with God; they know God (John 17:3, 24); they are at home with the

Lord (John 14:2; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8).

(2) For those who disobey God and reject His gift of life, offered through Jesus Christ His Son, there is an experience of spiritual suffering that can best be described as "Hell." This comes as a result of separation from God, which means spiritual death (Matthew 13:42; 22:13). The enemies of God are banished to "outer darkness" (Matthew 25:41); those who reject Christ are condemned (John 3:18).

But "The Lord is . . . not willing that *any* should perish." He has provided the Way of Life and has made it available for all on the simplest terms. He has warned us of the way of death and has given us a foretaste of it. If men choose spiritual death rather than the life of God and with God, who is to blame? The Gospel is the Good News of God's gift of life. This life begins here, and we may know that it is ours (John 3:36; 11:25, 26). God, our loving Heavenly Father, has done His part to make eternal life possible for us and to make known the Way. Shall we not accept His Way with thanksgiving?

XIX

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

HUNDREDS of Christians have, in past years, sold their homes, disposed of their earthly possessions, packed up a few of their most necessary goods, and removed to Palestine to await the expected return of Jesus Christ to earth. Thousands of other well-educated Bible students, who are devout Christians, look forward to the personal return of Jesus Christ to earth, but are less pronounced as to the time and place of His appearing. This topic is discussed in countless sermons and Bible conferences. At least one pastor of a large metropolitan church preaches on some phase of the "Second Coming" every Sunday night to crowded audiences. More than one Christian sect are called "Adventists" to signify their faith in our Lord's return. Most of these Christians believe that we may expect Him in the not very distant future.

On the other hand, while many are ignorant and indifferent, other thousands of earnest Christian Bible students are equally persuaded that Jesus will never return to earth in visible form, or that if He does it cannot be until after a "millennial" period of righteousness and peace.

Hundreds of books have been written on this subject from many points of view. Obviously this brief study can give only some suggestions as to the basis for belief and as an appetizer to incite to further study. A number of books are recommended at the close of the study.—*D. L. P.*

Who is right? Is it important? How can we know? Are there any signs by which we can foresee the day approaching? Is this belief a hindrance or a help to character, faith and life?

Which view is right? Should we look for Christ to return to earth in person so that those living may see Him, or is His promised return only spiritual, seen in His increasingly dominant control? If He is to come in person, may He be expected before or after a "millennium"? Science, philosophy and experience cannot answer these questions. If we can know anything definite on the subject, it must be revealed by God, who alone knows. If He has spoken, then our understanding of the subject is a matter of knowledge and a correct interpretation of His revealed facts.

Has God spoken? This subject of the Second Coming of Christ is one of the most frequently dealt with in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. The definiteness and the accuracy of the numerous Old Testament prophecies as to Christ's First Advent are acknowledged, *and yet* when He came few of His own people recognized and received Him. The New Testament predictions as to His Second Advent are even more numerous and definite, and yet many do not expect their fulfilment. How many of His followers are watching for Him and how many will recognize and receive Him? Do ignorance, indifference, prejudice or misconception blind our minds as they blinded the eyes of many in the first century?

Old Testament Teaching: Before the birth of Jesus, many prophecies combined references to the

First and Second Comings. Some presented a "fore-shortened" view of the two events, so that it was difficult to distinguish between the references to the two Advents. (See Ps. 2:8; 72:2-19; Isa. 9:1-7; 11:1-10; 32:1; 53:10; 61:1-3; Mal. 3:1-6.) When Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1-3 (Luke 4:18-21), He stopped in the middle of the prophecy because the time for the fulfilment of the last event (judgment) had not yet arrived. Many Old Testament prophecies as to the establishment of God's kingdom on earth are interpreted to refer to the period following the Second Coming of Christ. They were clearly not fulfilled in His First Advent.

The Old Testament prophets predicted that Jesus was coming to reveal God and to save men. Both Old and New Testament writers teach that the time is coming when the Messiah will reign over all the earth and will establish universal peace and righteousness. No one who studies history will claim that these latter prophecies have been fulfilled.

New Testament Teaching: Naturally the Second Coming is referred to more frequently in the New Testament. In fact, it is definitely mentioned over three hundred times; one verse in every twenty-five relates to this or associated events. It must, therefore, be important. Jesus Himself is quoted in all the four Gospels as predicting His return. It is frequently mentioned in the Acts, in all of Paul's epistles except two; also by James, Peter, and Jude, and by John in his First Epistle and in the Revelation.

What Christ Said

1. He definitely promised to return, but said that only God, the Father, knew the time (John 16: 18-23; Mat. 24: 35, 44; 25: 6).

2. He promised to return visibly, so that there would be no doubt that He had returned (Mat. 24: 30; 26: 64; Acts 1: 11).

3. He warned men against the claims of false Christs and mentioned certain things that must first be accomplished (Mat. 24: 5, 11, etc.).

4. He commanded His disciples to watch, to be faithful to the end, so as to be ready for His return (Mat. 24: 42, 44; 25: 13).

5. He promised blessing to those who were ready and watching at His coming (Mat. 24: 45, 46; Luke 12: 37-43; John 14: 3).

6. He predicted that His return would be followed by a reign of peace and righteousness (Mat. 25: 31).

7. He predicted that His return would be connected with the resurrection of believers and would be followed by the giving of rewards and punishments (Mat. 16: 27, etc.).

8. He mentioned certain signs that would indicate the approach of the event (Mat. 24: 5-14).

What the Apostles Said

Other New Testament writers, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, enlarged on the teachings of Christ.

1. They expected Jesus to return visibly, in person (Acts 3: 20, 21; 1 Cor. 11: 26; 1 Thess. 1: 10).

2. They expected that He might return in the near future, without any long intervening period of universal peace and righteousness, known as the "millennium" (1 Cor. 1:7; 1 John 2:28).

3. They connected His return with the resurrection of believers and with the judgment of unbelievers (1 Cor. 15:23; Phil. 3:20).

4. They declared that, while no one knew the time of His coming, certain signs might be looked for to indicate the approach of the event (1 Thess. 5:2, 3; 2 Peter 1:16).

5. They said that the time was "not yet," that certain important things must first take place (2 Thess. 2:1-8).

6. They predicted that blessing would come to those ready and watching, and that sorrow and disaster would overtake those unprepared for or hostile to His coming (2 Tim. 4:1-8).

7. They declared that an eager looking forward to the return of Christ would have a profound influence on faith, life and service (Acts 3:21; Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 5:23; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1-8; Titus 2:13, 14; James 5:7, 8; 1 Peter 1:7; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 2:28; 3:3).

The book of the Revelation, the only distinctly prophetic book in the New Testament, given to the Apostle John in his old age, to reveal the outlook before the Church, foretells the return of Jesus Christ. This is the only book where a "millennium" (or a thousand years) is mentioned, as a period when the will of God will be done, and when Satan will not be free to lead

men astray as he does today. But it does not clearly state whether this "millennium" will be before or after the return of Jesus to earth.

The Second Coming of Christ has been called one of the two great focal points of Bible history. It is vitally related to "dispensational truth" and to the understanding of the Scriptures. As the salvation of the individual from sin and the establishment of the Church of Christ are the result of the First Advent, so the salvation of society—the whole world—and the establishment of the visible Kingdom of God are predicted as a result of the Second Advent.

The Effect of This Belief

While Christians differ as to the time, nature and related events of the Second Coming, it is interesting to notice that those who believe in the great importance and imminence of that event are most enthusiastic as to the blessed influence of this belief on their understanding of the Scriptures and on their daily life and service.

It is impressive to note, too, how many intelligent and devout students of the Bible have been ardent believers in the so-called "Premillennial" view of the Second Coming. Among them were John and Charles Wesley, George Müller, Charles H. Spurgeon, J. Hudson Taylor, Charles Cuthbert Hall, Dwight L. Moody, Arthur T. Pierson, A. J. Gordon and a large number of leading Biblical exegetes, as well as hundreds of missionaries and evangelists. Some of these have put on record their testimonies as to the effect that this

view of Christ's promised return has had on their personal faith and life:

The Effect on Hope: George Müller, of Bristol, wrote in 1829: "My views on this point have been vague and unscriptural. I had expected that the whole world would soon be converted. But now I found that we have not the least Scriptural warrant for the conversion of the world before the return of our Lord. Not death, but the return of Jesus, was the hope of the apostolic Christians. This truth so entered my heart that, though I went to Devonshire very weak and scarcely expecting ever to return to London, yet I immediately turned from looking for death to look for the return of the Lord. Having seen this truth, the Lord also graciously enabled me to apply it and to try to discover what I might do for the Lord before He should return."

The Effect on Joy: Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, the famous evangelist, wrote: "The truth of our Lord's premillennial return has worked out in my life in a very practical and helpful way. It has increased my desire to serve Him. It has given me an optimistic spirit concerning the advancement of the cause of Christ, and it has given me an ever-increasing joy in preaching."

The Effect on Faith: Dr. Anderson-Berry, of Scotland, the son of a minister, who became an atheist, wrote that one night a friend asked him to go to a religious meeting where the return of the Lord was being discussed. What he heard led to his conversion. He says: "The Lord brought me to Himself

and prepared me *for* His coming by revealing to me the truth *about* His coming."

A Key to the Bible: Dr. Arthur T. Pierson, a well-known Bible scholar and missionary advocate, wrote: "When I found this truth I began to discover what I had not seen before, that it is the pivot of every epistle of the New Testament. Two-thirds of the Bible which had been sealed to me were opened by this key, and I was permitted to enter and walk through the marvelous chambers of mystery."

The Effect on Life: Rev. J. Hudson Taylor, saintly founder of the China Inland Mission, wrote: "I believe that the ignorance of native Christians generally of the fact that Christ is coming again is one reason for the selfishness and the worldliness to be found in some branches of the Church in China. Well do I remember the effect when God was pleased to open my own heart to this great truth that the Lord Jesus was coming again and might come at any time. Since He may come any day, it is well to be ready every day. I do not know of any truth that has been a greater blessing to me through life than this."

The Effect on Service: Rev. A. J. Gordon, one of the brilliant, spiritual Bible teachers and ministers of the past half-century, wrote: "If we believe that the renovation of the world is contingent on the return of Christ, and that the time of His return will be determined, as far as the Church is concerned, by witnessing to the Gospel of the Kingdom among all peoples, no expression of doubt as to the permanent value of missionary work among non-Christian peoples can

deter us from any self-sacrifice which may hasten that consummation."

The Effect on Thought: The Earl of Shaftesbury, one of Great Britain's most famous Christian reformers, wrote: "I do not think that in the last forty years I have lived one conscious hour that was not influenced by the thought of the Lord's return."

The Effect on Preaching: Dr. O. F. Bartholow, pastor of a large church and leader of a noted men's Bible class near New York City, wrote: "I was trained in the postmillennium view, but when I began to study the Bible I came to believe in the premillennial view and to preach it. The result has been that a new spirit came into my preaching. It put new power and the spirit of service in the church, and gave energy in every field of activity."

The Effect on Missionary Motive: Dr. Arthur T. Pierson, for many years editor of *The Missionary Review of the World*, also wrote: "From the first day when I saw the hope of our Lord's return as imminent, new courage came into my soul, and new iron into my blood, and I have been laboring under the divinely inspired expectation of the successful completion of Christ's body, the Church, an expectation that is confirmed and established both by experience and observation."

If the results of study of this subject, and a clear apprehension of the personal coming of the Lord, have such a place in the Scriptures and have produced such results in experience, is it not important for us to study it prayerfully and diligently and with open mind and heart?

Books for Further Study

"His Appearing and His Kingdom," by Hagin (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York).

"Jesus Is Coming," by Blackstone (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York).

"Ecce Venit," by Gordon (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York).

"The Return of Christ," by Erdman (George H. Doran Company, New York).

The "Postmillennial" views are presented in the volume of "Systematic Theology" by Hodge and other theologians.

XX

CREEDS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

AFTER all, how much difference does it make *what* a man believes? Is it true, as many say, that what one believes does not matter much, it is what a man *does*; that conduct counts rather than creed?

It is true that many men look upon creeds as loose-fitting garments, easily put on or off. They are not a part of the man himself. Many are especially prone to take religious beliefs very lightly. They do not seem to have much effect on character and works. To multitudes a creed, like political bias, is inherited from parents. A man is a Hindu, a Parsee, a Moslem, a Roman Catholic because his father or mother was such. But this is not a good reason for taking lightly the responsibilities involved in our profession of beliefs.

Many are inconsistent. They profess to believe one thing and they do another. Some are plainly hypocrites. This brings expressions of faith into ill-repute. Unbelievers are led to blaspheme when a man who professes to be a follower of Christ is discovered knowingly practicing dishonesty or impurity or unkindness. This is a great hindrance to the progress of Christian missions. In China and India the name "Christian" has been looked upon as synonymous with American or European. Therefore, when men and

women from these lands were discovered as leading impure lives, or dishonest and unfriendly, all the teachings of Christian missionaries were discounted. What had these foreigners to offer that was better than the religion of the land? The same thing is true in the Near East where there are large bodies of Oriental Christian sects. The term Christian, and the distinctive Christian beliefs have been discredited because the name denoted Nestorian, Greek, Armenian, Syrian, Copt, and many in these sects have inherited Christian names, traditions and ritual, but show little evidence of the vital life and faith that comes with regeneration by the Spirit of God.

Without argument, two things are conceded:

1. "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). A creed that does not reveal its vitality in conduct is valueless. A man cannot inherit faith or religion. Nominal Christianity is not true Christianity.

2. To profess belief in something vital and to ignore the natural consequences of that belief is worse than unbelief. Hypocrisy is the sin that Christ most strongly condemned. The Pharisees claimed to know the truth, but did not live by the light they had; therefore they sinned and were doomed to die (John 9:41).

But does this mean that a creed is merely a "scrap of paper"? Were our forefathers wrong who fought and died for a right to believe and to express their belief? In science, what a man believes about the effect of mixing two chemicals or gases may spell life or death. It makes a vast difference what a doctor

and a patient believe about certain drugs—if they act according to their belief. In business, what a man believes about an investment may result in poverty or in wealth. In politics, what voters believe largely determines history. An architect's faith in the nature of a foundation determines the building he will erect.

The Scriptural "Therefore"

There was no doubt in the mind of Jesus Christ or in the minds of the New Testament writers as to the results that should follow belief, the consequences that should be expected from a man's creed. A study of the "therefores," the "wherefores" and the "ifs" of Scripture is illuminating.

"Why *call* ye me, Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

To *call* a plant a fig tree does not determine its character. "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Mat. 7:16). It is not enough for sinners to *say* they have sinned and repent; they must "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Mat. 3:8).

The Apostle Paul makes frequent use of the words "therefore," "wherefore" and "so then" to show the consequences that follow true faith. Do you believe that Christ rose from the dead and conquered death? "*Therefore . . . be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Do you believe that your body is the temple of God's Holy Spirit? "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit" (1 Cor. 6:20).

Do you believe that God, in His love and power,

cares for the sparrows? "Fear not therefore," but trust Him to care for you.

Do you believe that all authority is given to Christ in heaven and on earth? "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."

Do you believe that Jesus is coming again as He said, suddenly and unannounced? "Watch therefore" and be ready (Mat. 24:42).

Do you believe that God has spoken to us through the Old Testament writers and through His Son? "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed" (Hebrews 2:1).

Do you believe that you are a debtor to God for all His blessings? "Therefore . . . abound in this grace also" of liberal and systematic giving (2 Cor. 8:7).

A man's creed is of vital importance if it is vital. What he really believes must affect his thinking, his character, his conduct, his destiny. It is, therefore, important to know what we believe, to know the foundation for our faith, to formulate our faith into a simple, practical creed, and then to make our conduct conform to our faith.

We have studied twenty articles of faith that are in a Christian's creed. To believe these things is not enough. There are definite obligations that follow if we are not to have our portion with hypocrites. Acting in harmony with faith brings clear faith and is rewarded by growth and by the blessing of God.

Results of Personal Faith

It will be interesting and helpful for any man or woman to put down clearly in writing the religious convictions which have been reached after careful study. If we are convinced of their importance, should we not also put down, conscientiously, the logical consequences of such beliefs? If a man believes that intemperance is a curse, should a statement of his conviction end the matter? If a man believes that a personal and holy God has lovingly revealed the way of life and death to man, is there no obligation attached to that belief? The following statement of faith and the logical consequences may be helpful:

1. I believe that a POSITIVE FAITH as to important issues is more helpful than uncertainty or unbelief. *Therefore*, I will earnestly study the basis for religious faith that has proved helpful to others, and I will endeavor to act conscientiously and in harmony with truth as it becomes known to me.

2. I believe in GOD, an all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving Designer and Creator of the universe; a Spirit who is also the Law-giver, Ruler and Heavenly Father; One who desires and deserves worship and loyal obedience of every man. *Therefore*, I will seek to know, worship and obey this God.

3. I believe in JESUS CHRIST, as the Revelation of God in human form; the One whose Spirit is God; the Lord and King who deserves our worship and obedience; the Saviour, by whose life and death those who accept and yield to Him have eternal life. *There-*

fore, I will trust in Christ; I will confess and follow Him.

4. I believe in the HOLY SPIRIT of God, who is now in the world, ready to teach, purify and help men to make them become God-like. *Therefore*, I will seek the help of God's Spirit in all things.

5. I believe that the BIBLE is an authentic record of the history of God's revelation of Himself and His will to men; a revelation by experience and by special revelation to prophets, apostles and especially through the life, works and words of Jesus Christ.

I believe that the teachings of the Bible are an infallible rule of faith and practice, and give the only safe and sure guide for life and the only reliable record of God's revelation of His will and the future life. *Therefore*, I will study the Bible prayerfully and will seek to follow its teachings.

6. I believe that the failure of men to do the will of God is SIN, and that this sin results in ruin and death.

I believe that there is a PERSONAL DEVIL, a spirit operating outside of man and alluring him to evil, appealing to a natural weakness that hinders man from doing right. *Therefore*, I will seek God's help to resist the temptations of the devil and I will confess my sins to God and seek to overcome them.

7. I believe that man is unable by himself perfectly to obey the will of God, and that he constantly needs forgiveness for sin and power from God to choose and do the right.

I believe that this FORGIVENESS comes through Jesus

Christ, who frees His followers from the curse and power of sin and gives unto them eternal life. *Therefore*, I will seek forgiveness from God and will trust in Christ for freedom from the guilt and power of sin.

8. I believe that the life of the CHRISTIAN—the open and sincere follower of Christ—is the happiest, most successful and most noble and useful life that a man can live.

In order to live this life, I believe that a man must accept the claims of Christ and surrender to His leadership, forsaking sin and seeking to live unselfishly, righteously and humbly before God and man. *Therefore*, I will seek to know and lead a Christian life.

9. I believe that the CHURCH is the organization founded by Christ and composed of His disciples and friends.

I believe that the Church should include all who are true followers of Christ and that their aim should be to manifest His Spirit, do His work and learn of Him and His will.

I believe that denominations or sects are only branches of the one great Church and that a man should join and worship and work with that which seems to him best to conform to the Bible standard and best to manifest the Spirit of Christ. *Therefore*, I will unite with Christ's Church for worship and for work.

10. I believe that BAPTISM is a rite used and authorized by Christ to indicate the putting away of sin and the beginning of a new and holy life, separated unto

God—a life renewed and empowered by the Spirit of God.

I believe that those should be baptized who have determined to forsake sin and have surrendered to Christ, but the mode of baptism may be left to the individual interpretation of the teachings of the Bible. *Therefore*, I will accept baptism as a sign of new life begun by the power of the Spirit.

11. I believe that the only WORK that is worth while is doing the will of God and that this is active service for the benefit of others. *Therefore*, I will make my chief aim in life to serve others and to do God's will.

12. I believe that MONEY is stored-up power and is useful only in proportion as it helps us to do our work in a way pleasing to God.

I believe that the man is the happiest and wisest who gives most largely and intelligently to help others to learn and do the will of God. *Therefore*, I will seek to earn and use money, as a steward of God, to help do God's work in the world.

13. I believe that SUFFERING is caused by sin, or broken laws, and that it is intended to warn us and to lead to the remedy. All is evidence of God's love. *Therefore*, I will seek the remedy for suffering and will through it try to learn the lessons God wishes to teach.

14. I believe that the WORLD and man were created by God for a good purpose, and that they belong to God and should be developed to conform to God's ideals as revealed in the Bible. *Therefore*, I will try

to use the material world and not abuse it and will try to help win mankind to the service of Christ.

15. I believe that God is the Architect of HISTORY as well as of the universe, and that while, for a time, things may appear disastrous, in the end the good plans of God will be carried out.

I believe that God has made man a free agent and that he can choose to disregard God's laws at his own cost, but cannot thwart God's ultimate designs. *Therefore*, I will try to discover God's plan and to work in harmony with it.

16. I believe that AMUSEMENTS are given to relieve the strain of work and to prepare a man for better service; that they are not helpful but a hindrance when they become an end in themselves.

I believe that only those pleasures or pastimes should be indulged in, and only to such a degree, as to replenish waste and build up energy, and in a way beneficial to the man himself, and not injurious to others. *Therefore*, I will seek only helpful recreations and pleasures and will use them so as to prepare me for better work.

17. I believe that MARRIAGE was ordained by God as the union for life of one man and one woman, in order that they may the better develop in their own lives and may help replenish the earth with intelligent, well-trained men and women, who will do the will of God.

I believe that divorce is an evil and is only permissible when marriage vows are broken, and that then the divorced parties should not remarry during

the lifetime of the other. *Therefore*, if I marry it will be to establish a Christian home on the basis of true love for life.

18. I believe that PRAYER is a great means of strength and of coming into closer partnership with God, so that our desires and achievements may be according to His will. I believe that God answers the prayer of faith, offered to Him in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ.

I believe that to be effectual prayer must be sincere, definite, must be according to the will of God and must come from one who is seeking to do that will in all things. *Therefore*, I will pray to God definitely, regularly, earnestly and will seek the best things in harmony with His will.

19. I believe that the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN is the realm in which God's sovereignty is acknowledged and the will of God is done.

I believe that God's will and the opportunity to know and to do it were presented at the coming of Christ; it should be extended by every Christian and will be established in the future throughout the universe. *Therefore*, I will study to know and obey the laws of the Kingdom and to extend the sway of Christ over all men.

20. I believe that as Jesus Christ came nineteen hundred years ago to reveal God and to open the way of life, so He will return again, visibly and personally, to establish His kingdom on earth. *Therefore*, I will seek to be faithful to my trust, to watch for His Com-

ing, and to be at all times ready to give account to Christ.

21. I believe that DEATH is the result of sin — of broken laws—and that as physical death is a separation of the spirit from the body, so spiritual, or eternal death is separation of man's spirit from God—a result of unrepented sin and an uncorrected evil nature. *Therefore*, I will prepare for physical death but will not fear it.

22. I believe that as man is more than an animal and has a spiritual nature like God's, so his spirit continues to live after it leaves the body.

I believe that the LIFE AFTER DEATH is determined by the life on earth, by a man's tastes and choices for or against God, and by a man's relation to Jesus Christ, so that man chooses his own sphere hereafter.

I believe that the Biblical descriptions of the life of joy or misery hereafter represent the experiences of life with God and apart from God. *Therefore*, I will cultivate my spiritual life as most important, and will seek to prepare for life with God.

In Conclusion

Faith in a person, particularly faith in a divine personality, is more important than faith in "things" or in doctrinal statements. These are not necessarily inconsistent or antagonistic. Indeed, trust in a *person* involves belief in what that person has done and has taught or promised. Faith in Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and Saviour of men, is the basis of all Christian belief, doctrine and life. It is more im-

portant to be able to say with the Apostle Paul: "I know *whom* I have believed" than to say "I know *what* I have believed." But belief in Christ is only a dead creed, unless it leads to acceptance of His claims and teachings, followed by surrender to Him and obedience to His commands. Such faith and life result from a will to believe and follow Him, and are strengthened by the study of the Bible and by earnest, believing prayer to God.

Credo

Not what, but Whom, I do believe!
That in my darkest hour of need,
Hath comfort that no mortal creed
To mortal man may give.
Not what, but Whom!
For Christ is more than all the creeds
And His full life of gentle deeds
Shall all the creeds outlive.
Not what I do believe, but Whom!
Who walks beside me in the gloom?
Who shares the burden wearisome?
Who all the dim way doth illume,
And bids me look beyond the tomb
The larger life to live?
Not what I do believe, but Whom!
Not what, but Whom!

JOHN OXENHAM.



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Why believe it?

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